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The mystery of the medieval monarch's demise

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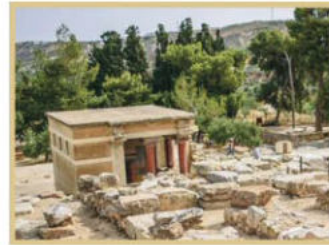
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JULY 2017

WELCOME

BBC **HiSTORY**
MAGAZINE

“King John was one of England's least popular monarchs and there must have been many people during his reign who wished to see him dead. But did one of them take the ultimate step and **assassinate the king**, as a rumour that swept 13th-century Europe suggests? In this issue's cover feature on page 20, Dr Laura Ashe investigates this allegation and considers what the story can tell us about medieval attitudes towards kingship.

Another dramatic tale we are exploring this month is the 1940 evacuation of Allied troops from the beaches of **Dunkirk**. This iconic moment in Britain's Second World War story is the subject of a major new historical blockbuster starring the likes of Tom Hardy, Mark Rylance and Kenneth Branagh. On page 50, Dr Tim Benbow narrates the tale of the **Allied operation** and considers some of the big questions that still occupy historians today. Did Hitler allow the Allies to escape? And how much did the evacuation affect the war's outcome?

One of the topics that has dominated British political discourse in recent years has been that of migration, which came into sharp focus at the time of the EU referendum. Though nowadays the discussions mainly revolve around those coming in to Britain, back in the 17th century there was great concern about the **huge numbers leaving the country**. On page 40 James Evans explains why hundreds of thousands fled England to seek a better life in the Americas, and reveals whether their new lives matched up to their aspirations.



Rob Attar

Editor

BSME Editor of the Year 2015, Special Interest Brand

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Laura Ashe

King John is famous for being a truly terrible king – and his people thought so at the time. But the fact that medieval people believed they had the right to judge their king would change history.

● **Laura asks if 'Bad' King John was murdered on page 20**



Clare Mulley

These women were not just small cogs in a machine doing what was expected of them. They made great efforts not just to work, but to lead the way in male dominated industries.

● **Clare talks about her new book on two women who flew for the Nazis on page 65**



James Evans

Why did so many people leave 17th century England for North America? Both Bismarck and Churchill thought the fact that they did was the most important in the modern world.

● **James explores England's 17th-century migration crisis on page 40**

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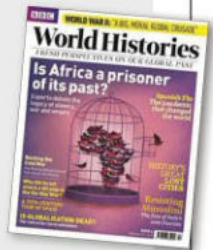
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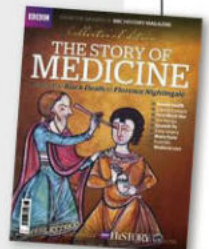
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SOLDIERS EVACUATING AT DUNKIRK/ALAMY. THIS PAGE: BBC – CHRIS CARDWELL/STEVE SAYERS – THESECRETSTUDIO.NET

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GETTY/WM/BRIDGEMAN



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**“BY KILLING KING
JOHN, THE MONK
RELEASED ENGLAND
FROM THE CLUTCHES
OF A TYRANT”**

Dominic Sandbrook highlights events that took place in **July** in history

ANNIVERSARIES

4 July 1862

The tale of Alice in Wonderland is born

A young girl from Oxford provides inspiration for one of literature's best-loved characters

The scene is the river Isis, near Oxford, on a cool, drizzly summer afternoon in July 1862. After a leisurely lunchtime picnic, two men are rowing a boat back into the city from the village of Godstow. One is a young priest called Robinson Duckworth. The other is an Oxford mathematician called Charles Dodgson, who has planned the outing to entertain his college dean Harry Liddell's three daughters, 13-year-old Lorina, 10-year-old Alice and eight-year-old Edith.

It is Alice who is Dodgson's favourite. And, as the boat glides along the Isis, he begins to tell her a story with a heroine just like herself – a girl called Alice.

Better known by his pen name Lewis Carroll, Dodgson was a very eccentric man indeed; biographers have often detected something faintly disturbing in

his fondness for Alice Liddell. But she clearly enjoyed his story that afternoon, with its strange, magical setting and eclectic fairytale characters, and she begged him to write it down for her.

Seized with enthusiasm, Dodgson started work the next day. But it was not until November 1864, more than two years later, that he presented Alice with a beautifully illustrated handwritten manuscript, entitled *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*. It bore a heartfelt dedication: "A Christmas Gift to a Dear Child in Memory of a Summer's Day."

By now, Dodgson had already shown the manuscript to other friends, who thought it was brilliant. Almost exactly a year later, it appeared in print, albeit with a new title: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.



Alice Liddell (shown far right with her sisters) was the inspiration behind Lewis Carroll's fantastical fairytale, *Alice in Wonderland*

14 July 1789

Mobs storm the Bastille

A symbol of Parisian royal oppression is brought to its knees

Bernard-René de Launay was not a bad man. Born in 1740, he had spent much of his career in the French Guards, stationed in Paris, before becoming, like his father before him, the governor of the vast state prison in the centre of the capital. Contrary to what was claimed in political pamphlets of the day, the Bastille was not really such a terrible place. De Launay himself had a reputation as a reasonably considerate gaoler, and far from being stuffed with political dissidents, the Bastille was actually pretty empty. On the morning of 14 July 1789, in fact, de Launay was in charge of only seven prisoners – four forgers, two madmen and a dissolute aristocrat.

To the Paris mob, however, the Bastille was a time-honoured symbol of royal oppression. With France in the grip of a severe economic crisis, bread prices soaring, the political system deadlocked and the streets full of hysterical rumours, it was perhaps only a matter of time before the demonstrators attacked the prison. On the morning of the 14th they struck, demanding that de Launay surrender the keys and hand over all arms and artillery. At around lunchtime, they broke through into the outer courtyard. Shots were fired; the mood turned ever uglier. By 5.30 that afternoon, the fortress had fallen.

De Launay's fate was a grim omen of the bloodshed that lay ahead. Dragged to the nearby town hall amid a hail of blows and abuse, he eventually kicked out at one of his attackers, an unemployed pastry cook. At that, the mob almost literally tore him to pieces, stabbing his helpless body again and again. A local butcher, one Mathieu Jouve, pulled out a knife and sawed the governor's head off.

GETTY IMAGES

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and presenter. His series about Britain in the 1980s was shown last year on BBC Two



GETTY IMAGES

Jean-Pierre Houël's 1789 painting of the storming of the Bastille. Despite containing only seven prisoners that night, the state prison, where France's kings had routinely imprisoned subjects for treason, was an inevitable target for the rising tide of dissent against the aristocracy

6 July 1189

After the death of his father Henry II, with whom he has fallen out, **Richard the Lionheart (right)** accedes the English throne.



31 July 1932

In Germany's federal elections, **Hitler's Nazi Party wins 38 per cent of the vote** and 230 seats to become the largest party in parliament for the first time.

18 July 1976

In Montreal, the 14 year old Nadia Comaneci (right) becomes the **first gymnast in Olympic history to score a perfect 10**.



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH YOUNG

28 July 1540

Henry VIII marries wife number five

Wedding bells chime as Thomas Cromwell loses his head

For Thomas Cromwell, 28 July 1540 was not a good day. More than a month earlier, he had been dragged from a meeting of Henry VIII's council and thrown into the Tower of London. Accused of treason, the king's disgraced chief minister begged his old master for mercy, but it was no good. At Tower Hill, he was hauled to the block, where the executioner – "a ragged and butcherly miser", said one witness – wasted little

time in carving off his head.

For the young Catherine Howard, however, this was a date to remember. Even as Cromwell was being taken to the scaffold, the Duke of Norfolk's pretty teenage niece was dressing for the most important day of her life. Only a few days earlier, the king had secured an annulment of his marriage to Anne of Cleves, and his eye had already fallen on Catherine as her replacement. It was

apparently love – or lust – at first sight, at least for Henry.

Did Catherine know that, even as she was repeating her marriage vows at Surrey's Oatlands Palace, Cromwell's freshly severed head was rotting on a spike? We will never know. What we do know, though, is that her 49-year-old husband seemed aflame with passion, since reports suggest he could barely keep his hands off her.

At first, all seemed well, but as month followed month, the relationship began to turn sour. Perhaps, as the king's attentions waned and her own eye began to wander, Catherine sometimes reflected on the fate of the man who had once been the king's closest confidant.

16 July 1945

The US tests its atomic bomb

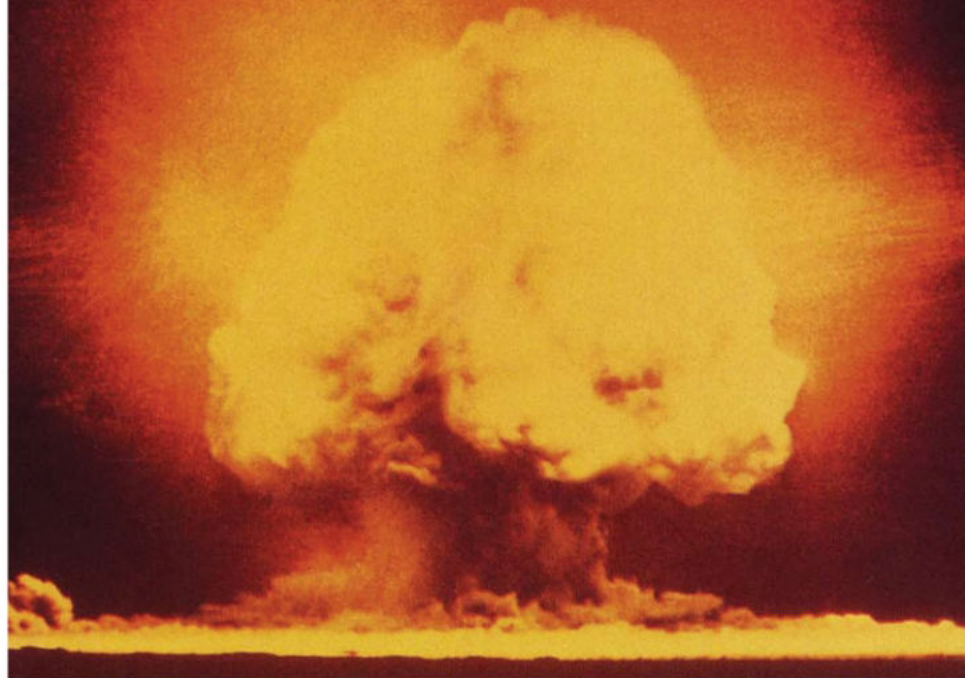
A huge ball of fire fills the skies above the New Mexico desert

It was almost 5.30am on 16 July 1945, in the dawn heat of the New Mexico desert, when the bomb exploded. “I was staring straight ahead with my open left eye covered by a welder’s glass and my right eye remaining open and uncovered,” recalled one observer, Ralph Carlisle Smith, who was watching from a nearby hilltop. “Suddenly, my right eye was blinded by a light which appeared instantaneously all about without any build up of intensity. My left eye could see the ball of fire start up like a tremendous bubble... It turned yellow, then red, and then beautiful purple.”

There was, he remembered, a loud cheer from the other watchers. Then one of the scientists said softly: “That was at least 5,000 tons and probably a lot more.”

The first US atomic bomb test, codenamed Trinity, was a genuine landmark in world history. After years of secret work, the scientists of the

The enormous fireball that followed the detonation of the world’s first atomic bomb. Code-named Trinity, the bomb was part of the Manhattan Project, set up by the US government during the Second World War



Manhattan Project had given the US government a weapon unparalleled in its sheer destructive power. At the test site in the remote heart of the desert, they could barely contain their excitement and their awe at the spectacle of the explosion. “The whole country was lighted by a searing light with the intensity many times that of the midday sun,” another observer said. “It was golden, purple, violet, gray and blue. It lighted every

peak, crevasse and ridge of the nearby mountain range with a clarity and beauty that cannot be described but must be seen to be imagined.”

For the director of the Los Alamos laboratory, Robert Oppenheimer, it was a moment of sweet vindication. Yet now, at the height of his triumph, a line from Hindu scripture came unbidden to him: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” **II**

COMMENT / Professor Michael Goodman

“The atomic bomb has been a weapon of intrigue but, above all, deterrence”

“ Oppenheimer’s words have become synonymous with that momentous and unworldly event in the normal serenity of the desert. The scientists standing there that morning were aware of the destructive power that they were unleashing upon the world, but they were probably unaware of how their creation would irrevocably alter the landscape of warfare and international relations.

The arms race for a nuclear weapon was clear from the outset. Begun out of a fear that Nazi Germany would build the atomic bomb first, the Manhattan Project would be run in utmost secrecy. Yet the

fact that such a programme existed was not a mystery to rival leaders, even if its detail was.

The politics of the bomb were as important as its scientific innovation and military potential. With the exception of the two devices dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War, the atomic bomb has been a weapon of intrigue but, above all, deterrence.

The legacy of the vast scientific enterprise led by Oppenheimer has been to change the military and political landscape of great swathes of the world.

As world powers strove to build bigger and better bombs, smaller nations sought to acquire the technology as an asymmetric tool in their arsenal: a means to punch above their weight and instil fear in neighbouring states. ”



Michael Goodman is professor of history in the department of war studies at King’s College London. He has published widely in the field of intelligence history and scientific intelligence

In this compelling investigation, Michael Smith explores the critical moment in a spy's life: that split-second decision to embrace a double life; to cheat and hide and hurt; to risk disgrace – even death – without any guarantee of being rewarded or even recognised.

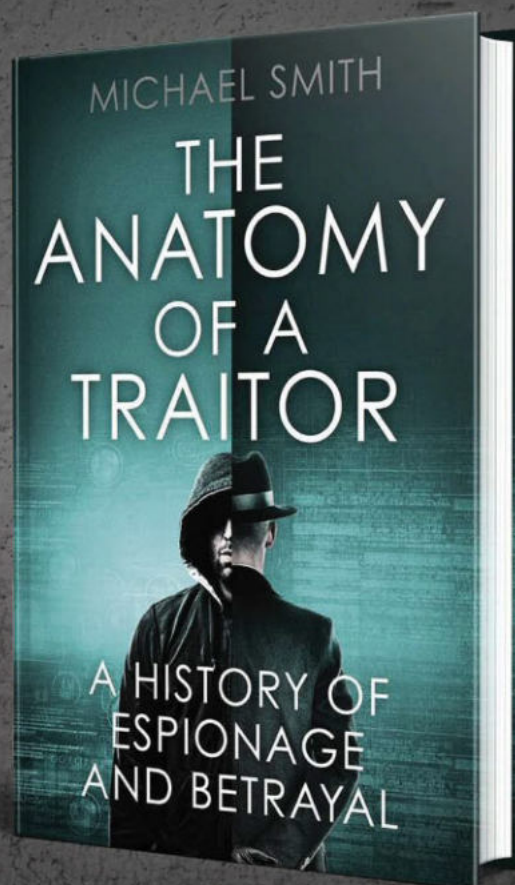
Featuring new and unknown cases, including ISIS, President Trump's alleged links with Russia and Edward Snowden's role as a whistleblower, Michael Smith offers fascinating psychological portraits of these men and women, homing in unerringly on the fault-lines and shady corners of their characters, their weaknesses and their strengths, the lies they tell other people, and the lies they always end up telling themselves.

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DAVID STANLEY

EYE OPENER

Alaskan treasures

Archaeologists at the University of Aberdeen have completed a seven-year project to recover and preserve more than 50,000 frozen Alaskan artefacts. Among the finds were 400-year-old wooden ritual masks and figures, such as those shown here. The artefacts will now be sent back to Alaska for the opening of a new culture and archaeology centre.

EXPERT COMMENT

"In terms of DNA, the remains of the Mary Rose sailors are in a fantastic condition"



Scientists are using molecular biology to reconstruct the skeletons of the crew of the *Mary Rose*. **Garry Scarlett**, who is working on the project, explains what DNA can tell us about life aboard Henry VIII's doomed flagship

What can we glean from the DNA of the *Mary Rose* sailors?

A full DNA analysis can provide a great deal of information about an individual – their physical characteristics and lineage. But this study has the much more limited goals of assigning the bones to form complete skeletons of sailors for study and display. It may also be possible to use some of this data to compare ancestral lineages of the crew.

Can you give us an example of what you've discovered so far?

We have already published our findings from the genetic analysis of the remains of a dog found on the ship. We were able to determine its coat colour, gender and breed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was a terrier, most closely related to modern Jack Russells. The reconstruction now forms a popular exhibit at the excellent new *Mary Rose* Museum in Portsmouth.

What sort of condition are the remains in?

In terms of DNA, the samples are in a fantastic condition. The main problem with working with ancient DNA samples is the DNA gets fragmented with time, making it hard to analyse. Being at the bottom of the Solent has meant the DNA was kept cold and away from

background radiation. It is still degraded but not as badly as we would normally expect.

What does the DNA tell us about Tudor life at sea?

By itself, very little! DNA analysis like this is really only useful when used in combination with many other disciplines that can provide archaeological and historical context to the samples. Studying the *Mary Rose* is a massive ongoing collaborative effort, each piece adding to how we understand our ancestors.

Has molecular biology been used to solve historical mysteries before now?

Archaeologists are using it more and more. But it's only useful when used in conjunction with other disciplines. Interestingly, there are whole genome analysis techniques, originally developed for personalised medicine, that are starting to be applied to historical DNA. These sophisticated techniques could well expand what molecular biologists can do for archaeologists. **II**

Dr Garry Scarlett is a DNA expert at the University of Portsmouth



The skeleton of a terrier that went down with the *Mary Rose*



5 things you might not know about... Tutankhamun

Following the transfer of his gilded bed and funeral chariot to the new Grand Egyptian Museum, we bring you five facts about the boy-king

1 His coffin is worth over £1m
Tutankhamun was buried in three coffins – each nesting inside another. The innermost coffin was made from thick sheets of beaten gold. If scrapped today, it would be worth in excess of £1m.

2 His original name was not Tutankhamun
The pharaoh's original name was Tutankhaten, in honour of Aten, the sun god worshipped by his parents. The young pharaoh eventually changed his religion and began worshipping Amun, the king of the gods, and changed his name to Tutankhamun.

3 His royal tomb is the smallest in the Valley of the Kings
The fashion for huge pyramids had ended by Tutankhamun's reign. These were replaced by decorative rock-cut tombs tunnelled into the Valley of the Kings. Tutankhamun's tomb is small and cramped, leading some to believe his successor, Ay, switched tombs and took Tutankhamun's for himself.

4 He enjoyed hunting ostriches
An elaborate fan that once boasted 42 ostrich feathers was found in Tutankhamun's burial chamber, close to his body. An embossed scene on the fan shows the pharaoh hunting ostriches and returning with his prey. The feathers in the fan were likely taken from ostriches captured by Tutankhamun.

5 His heart is missing
Internal organs were removed during mummification and preserved separately. The heart was thought to be needed in the afterlife yet Tutankhamun's is missing, replaced by an amuletic scarab (beetle) inscribed with a funerary spell.

£650,000

The amount that a ring containing a 19th century diamond, bought at a car boot sale for £10 in the 1980s, recently fetched at auction

NEW PROJECT

The Tudors' bedtime secrets

A new project is looking into 16th-century sleeping habits

The University of Manchester has teamed up with the National Trust to help people explore Tudor attitudes to sleep. The 'How We Used to Sleep' project at Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire sees visitors walk through installations that replicate a journey through a night's slumber in the 16th century.

The partnership is the result of a recent study by Dr Sasha Handley, senior lecturer in early modern history at the University of Manchester, who has been exploring the relationship between the culture and the quality of sleep in the early modern period.

"Our ancestors went to great lengths to sleep well," says Handley, who has published her findings in *Sleep in Early Modern England* (Yale UP, 2016). "They believed that well-regulated sleeping patterns held the key to long-term physical and mental health as well as being beneficial to the health of the soul.

"As a result, they cleansed and scented sleeping chambers, practised a series of calming bedtime rituals, such as prayer, and turned from right to left halfway through the night – all to achieve a good night's sleep."



A 15th-century image of St Ursula. The Tudors took sleep very seriously

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of stories hitting the history headlines



British WWII female spy to be honoured

Krystyna Skarbek – aka Christine Granville – is to be honoured with a bronze bust for her role as the first and longest-serving female special agent in the Second World War. Her achievements included providing Britain with the first evidence of Operation Barbarossa.

Were humans buried alive in South Korea?

Two fifth-century AD skeletons found beneath the walls of Wolseong Palace in South Korea may have been buried alive to appease the gods and ensure the castle's longevity, say experts. This would be the first archaeological evidence of such a ritual.

Rare William Caxton prints discovered

Two pages printed by William Caxton, the man who brought printing to England in the 15th century, have been found in the archives of Reading University Library.

The pages are believed to be from a book printed in London in the 1470s.

Leicester Cathedral to stage Richard III

Leicester Cathedral is to put on Shakespeare's *Richard III* just a few feet from his grave. The move has been condemned by some as "humiliating" to the dead king.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

The two skeletons found beneath the walls of Moon Castle; Krystyna Skarbek, pictured in 1945; an extract from the recently discovered Caxton pages; a portrait of Richard III inside Leicester Cathedral



The historians' view...

Is there any stopping Venezuela's descent into turmoil?

A nation once held up as a beacon of prosperity and liberalism is now blighted by poverty, violent street protests and a poisonous atmosphere between government and opposition factions. Two historians offer their views on the crisis engulfing Venezuela

Interviews by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history

“Hugo Chavez cast politics as a battle between ‘the people’ and a rapacious elite. But ‘Chavismo’ always had an authoritarian element

ALEJANDRO VELASCO

In the 1970s, where most of the region languished under coups, military rule, civil war and unrest, Venezuela seemed an island of democratic strength, wealth and social peace. Political scientists said it was the product of enlightened statesmen who, after ousting Venezuela's last dictatorship in 1958 and defeating a Marxist insurgency in 1968, built strong, broadly representative institutions and parties that alternated in power. Economists said it was the blessing of oil riches that generated consensus rather than conflict.

By the early 1990s, when oil prices had dropped precipitously, the ‘exceptionalist’ argument collapsed under the weight of the very things Venezuela was supposed to have overcome – coup attempts, economic

collapse, social unrest, state repression.

Huge oil price fluctuations explain much of this change. During boom years, state spending explodes, both to satiate pent up demands of bust years, and to curry political favour from the populace. Meanwhile, since dollars are plentiful, it's cheaper in the short term (even if costlier in the long term) to import goods from abroad than to invest in domestic industry.

But when oil prices collapse, a nation dependent on imports is unable to purchase goods it needs. It also has to service the debt it contracted during the boom years, leading to deep austerity affecting mostly the working classes and the poor. In Venezuela's fast growing cities, many lived in squatter settlements alongside but out of view of the gleaming high rises that were the more visible expression of wealth. Research has uncovered that, while seen from the level of high politics Venezuela seemed an exception, on the ground things were far less staid.

Leaders such as Hugo Chavez and his successor, Nicolas Maduro, have tried to balance mobilising popular support with reliance on more authoritarian approaches. Chavez promised to transform Venezuela from a liberal, representative democracy, to what he called a participatory, protagonistic democracy – one in which a more engaged citizenry would have a greater say.

He was extremely skilful at casting politics as an existential battle between ‘the people’

and a rapacious elite. Insofar as it purposely sidelined representative institutions, then, ‘Chavismo’ was always going to have an authoritarian component.

There have also been mistakes on the part of the opposition – for example the decision in 2005 to boycott parliamentary elections, alleging that they would be fraudulent. That, of course, gave Chavez complete control over the legislative branch, added to control over the military, the national oil company, the courts and, increasingly, the media. Current president Maduro inherited this model during a growing economic crisis, turning more openly authoritarian in the process.

The military has long played an important role not just in politics, but in the Venezuelan imagination. This goes back to the independence era, when Venezuelan troops took the lead in fighting Spanish colonialism. But more recently it has been seen more as a repressive force at the service of elites, or a corrupt exploiter of oil wealth.

Today, the military is most interested in the self-preservation of its elite sectors. It could step into the fray directly. And there are growing calls from some sectors of the opposition for the military to do just that.



Professor Alejandro Velasco is a historian of modern Latin America, based at New York University





Demonstrators clash with police on the streets of Caracas during a demonstration against President Nicolas Maduro on 19 April. Opposition leaders have likened Maduro's administration to a dictatorship



A luxury apartment building towers over the shanties below, Caracas, 1966



Hugo Chavez on the campaign trail with his wife, Marisabel. He was president of Venezuela from 1999–2013

“Despite running oil-funded social welfare programmes, the main political parties failed to inspire enduring support from low-income voters

REBECCA JARMAN

ed social welfare programmes, they failed to inspire enduring support from low-income voters.

In 1962 the radical left had responded to the outlawing of the Communist Party by forming groups of armed insurgents at the urban margins. By the 1990s, in the absence of industry and a large skilled workforce, those working in the informal economy found limited representation in trade unions. This exclusion from the workings of the traditional political system saw the emergence of grassroots initiatives in inner-city and rural settings.

For these groups, Hugo Chavez offered political diversity, a break in a bureaucratic white male order. When Chavez's 1992 coup attempt failed, the first words he spoke on national television in military uniform – “our mission has failed, for now” – was interpreted by many as a promise to overhaul a rigged system.

Community networks that helped deliver Chavez to power at the polling stations in 1998 are now an integral part of state fabric. The new constitution gave a starring role to ‘Communal Councils’ that were to supersede local government representatives and develop local infrastructure. Since Chavez's death in 2013, these organisations have had increasing responsibilities and privileges. These include the distribution of basic foodstuffs to citizens in possession of an ID card administered by the United Socialist

Party of Venezuela, and plans to create a ‘Constituent Assembly’ comprising delegates from communal associations. Perhaps more worryingly, some factions are known to be armed and support the police in violent repression of protests.

Beyond the state, as the economic crisis grows, informal networks have become crucial. Young professionals in the growing Venezuelan diaspora send money home to siblings and parents. Faced with a blockade on humanitarian aid, visitors arrive with suitcases of medicines and antibiotics.

Medical students respond to emergencies on their own time and at their own risk in deteriorating hospitals. Food is prepared in large groups to maximise scarce energy resources. Demonstrators use social media to organise and document mass protests and share creative strategies of resistance. While Venezuela's political system is collapsing,

civil society has, again, proved itself stronger. **H**



Dr Rebecca Jarman is a lecturer in Latin American cultural studies at the University of Leeds. Her book *Representing the Barrios* is due out soon

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

► **Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela** by Alejandro Velasco (California Press, 2015)

OLD NEWS*A not-so spy-proof invention***Falkirk Herald
16 December 1939**

In all his 90 years, Sir John Ambrose Fleming, inventor of the thermionic valve, had never had to deal with nosey journalists. He had been born in the middle of the Victorian era and developed a passion for engineering at a young age. His creation of the thermionic valve revolutionised wireless telegraphy and made modern broadcasting possible. Almost a century after his birth, Fleming still maintained his love of invention.

In December 1939, when the *Falkirk Herald* ran with news of Fleming's new "Spy Proof Invention", the Second World War had just broken out. Fleming had turned his mind to a system that permitted "the despatch of light signals which can be received only by those in possession of an instrument which renders them decodable", to help ships better communicate with those on land. Unfortunately, his "spy-proof system" was not journalist proof, and news of his invention quickly spread. One journalist had the audacity to ask him to describe it in detail. "I have submitted the invention to the Admiralty and am unable to say anything about it now," replied Fleming. You can almost hear him slam the phone down in disgust.

News story sourced from *britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk* and rediscovered by **Fern Riddell**.

Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN JONES

PAST NOTES
GIN**A woman brandishes a variety of alcoholic drinks, including gin, in the c1920s**

It may be a trendy tippie now, but the history of 'mother's ruin' is rather less well-to-do, says **Julian Humphrys**

Why is it called gin?

It's a shortening of 'jenever', the Dutch word for juniper, whose berries were used to flavour the spirit. The gin we think of today originated in the Netherlands; its production in England was promoted after 1688 by the Dutch king William III, who relaxed restrictions on distilling.

Why did people drink it?

Initially as a medicine, primarily to treat stomach complaints. In October 1663, Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary that he passed two stools after drinking "juniper water" to combat his constipation. However, gin's popularity spread not because of any presumed health benefits but because it was a rapid, and extremely cheap, way of getting intoxicated. The phrase 'Dutch courage' is said to have come from its consumption by 17th-century soldiers prior to battle.

How popular did it become?

Rather too popular – in the eyes of the authorities at least. Originally anyone could set up a distillery by posting a notice and waiting 10 days. Subsequent government attempts to restrain gin production by imposing

prohibitively expensive licences were simply ignored. The 18th century saw an extraordinary explosion in the number of shops selling cheap gin made from a variety of dubious ingredients. The disastrous impact this had on public sobriety was dramatically illustrated in William Hogarth's famous print *Gin Lane*.

In the mid-18th century the government gained some degree of control by introducing more reasonable excise duties and licensing retailers under the supervision of magistrates.

What were gin palaces?

From about 1830, spirit retailers devised 'gin palaces' to compete with the less-stringently controlled beer shops. Gin was still the poor's drink of choice but, instead of the sordid slums of the 18th century, they could now consume it in well-furnished premises that were indeed palaces compared with their own squalid homes.

When did we start adding tonic?

Actually it was the other way round. British expats in 19th-century India consumed anti-malarial quinine in the form of tonic water and added gin to make it more palatable. **H**



Michael Wood on... **radical Islamism**

“Hardline Salafists reject 1,400 years of Muslim thought”

“In 1799, Sir Harford Brydges, the British Resident in Baghdad, sent a fascinating piece of intelligence to London about a new sect in Arabia, the ‘True Muslims’, whose founder Muhammad ibn Wahhab had died seven years before. Born in 1703, Wahhab came from Najd in the heart of Arabia. After study at Medina and 12 years’ travel and study in Iraq, he returned to launch a puritanical reform of Islam aimed against popular piety, levelling saints’ tombs and cutting down sacred trees. He ordered the stoning of adulterous women, and preached jihad against unbelievers – Shia Muslims among them.

That story came to mind as the tragic events unfolded recently in my home town, Manchester. The world of Islam is vast and diffuse, but since the late 20th century Wahhab’s extremist ideas have come from the margins to the very centre, even though rejected by the vast majority of Muslims. We call them Wahhabi or Salafi. But what does that mean? And how did they spread?

The key is the alliance made by Wahhab with the Bedouin Saud family against the Ottomans in 1744 when they formed the first Saudi state, endorsing Wahhab’s puritanical reform movement. The message was spread in bloody wars of expansion. In 1802, at the Shia holy city Kerbala, 5,000 people were massacred. The cruelties of the “wahab-bis” are described by William Palgrave, a British explorer who crossed Arabia in 1862 disguised as a Syrian doctor. But their influence was largely confined to Najd until a century ago when the Saud clan became a power with their “puritanism by force”, as TE Lawrence described it.

Their subsequent rise to world significance was due to one thing: oil. Founded in 1932, the Saudi kingdom sealed its first oil deals with the US in 1933. Then, after 1945, with the rise of the consumer society in the west, and the 70s hike in oil prices, suddenly the Saudis wielded unimaginable economic power. It was a time when decolonisation in the Arab world had spawned back-to-roots Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, contesting western modernity. And the Saudis saw the possibility of spread-

ing Wahhab’s brand of Islam worldwide. In the last 40 years they have spent \$100bn on mosques and madrasas, publications and teaching, overwhelming other versions of the faith, asserting that theirs is the one true Islam.

This new radical Islamic movement is now known as Salafism, a word referring to the ‘ancestors’: the first three generations of Islam. The word doesn’t appear in its modern sense till after the 1960s; it is really a modern invention projected back into the past. Its hardliners, known as takfiris, reject almost the sum total of 1,400 years of Muslim thought. They denounce reason and philosophy (a great Muslim tradition), mysticism and Sufism (one of the richest traditions in Islam), they scorn history and culture (the monuments of Mecca and Medina have been swept away). All that matters is outward obedience.

Still worse, to mainstream sensibilities, is their view of what constitutes a Muslim. With tendentious readings of the Qur’an they arbitrarily declare people to be non-Muslims, changing the rules of Jihad to endorse suicide, terrorism and killing – going against the pluralist history of Islamic civilisation. It has been called the most dangerous idea to emerge in the Muslim world in the last century.

And here’s the paradox: Saudi Arabia is still officially a Wahhabi state. Post 9/11, it has denounced the extremists’ ‘satanic faith’ but it is still the main source of their funds, and the Saudi minister of religion is still drawn from the clan of Wahhab. Perhaps they hope for reform from within, but here is the root of what one might call the cognitive dissonance at the heart of the House of Saud.

Across the Muslim world resistance is growing. In 2016, Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country, hosted an international conference in which the head of the Al Ahzar university in Cairo proposed a definition of Sunni Islam excluding strict Wahhabism on the grounds that the takfiris are a source of violence and indiscriminate slaughter of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. And as recent events in Nice and Paris, London and Manchester have shown us, this battle within Islam will be one of the most important of our time. ■

Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series including *The Story of India* and *The Story of China*



ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

LETTERS

LETTER OF THE MONTH



A grey squirrel was just one of several animals gifted to a reader's great-great-great grandmother

Animal invasion

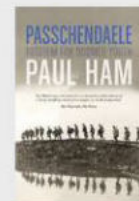
In *How the Victorians Ruined the World* (April), Kat Arney describes how grey squirrels invaded the UK, decimating the numbers of native red squirrels. Well, my great-great-great grandmother Elizabeth Lydia Lind was ahead of her time. Her diary entry for 29 September 1800 reads: "Mrs Merrill gave me grey American squirrel." And the note for 2 April 1809 records that "the grey American squirrel, which Mrs Merrill had given us in 1800, died".

In 1800, Dr and Mrs Lind were living at Haslar, where he was a physician at the naval hospital. It was lucky the squirrel died before the family settled on the Isle of Wight, as the island is one of the few places where red squirrels still thrive.

Other less controversial gifts recorded in Mrs Lind's diary include "a pair of doves" in June 1791. In July 1813, a "Cartagena nightingale" was given to their daughter, and a "mackaw from Cartagena which died 15 July 1816" to Elizabeth Lydia; while in September 1819, she "bought a tortoise [sic], died".

Biddy Trahair, Wiltshire

● We reward the Letter of the Month writer with our 'History Choice' book of the month. This issue, it's *Passchendaele: Requiem for Doomed Youth* by Paul Ham. Read the review on page 69



Close escape

Your centenary feature 'Bombed in Broad Daylight' (*Our First World War*, June) has reminded me of my introduction to history at the tender age of 10. In the mid-1930s, my grandfather, who had lived and worked in Spitalfields during the First World War, told me that one day he'd wanted to go into central London.

At Bishopsgate, he wasn't pleased to have missed his bus, but on arriving later at Liverpool Street station he saw what remained of it. The bus had taken a direct hit, killing the driver and passengers, except for one little girl who'd lost both her legs. Londoners experienced a new warfare that day. What a pity we never learn the lessons of history.

George Cobby, Warwickshire

Russian tragedy

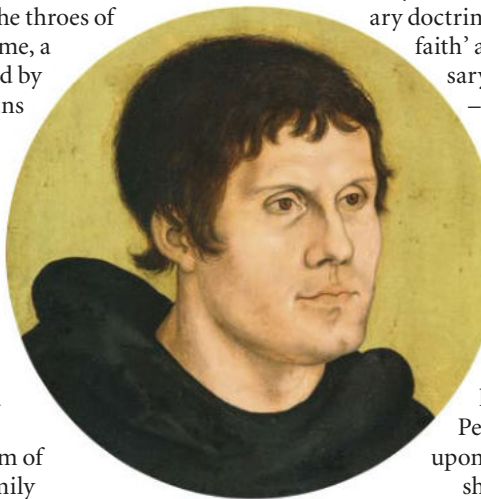
I believe that the final paragraph of the article 'Tragedy strikes at Nicholas II's Coronation' (*Anniversaries*, May) gives an unfortunate impression of the tsar's attitude to this event. The historian Edvard Radzinsky quotes from the tsar's diary: "...there was a terrible crush, and I must add terribly that about 1,300 people were trampled. At 12:30

we had lunch, then left for Khodynka, to attend this 'sad national holiday'..." Radzinsky states that at Khodynka Field: "Nicholas was embarrassed and distressed. Everyone noticed."

The evening 'dinner' was, in fact, a prearranged reception and ball given by the French ambassador; the tsar wished this to be cancelled, but was dissuaded by family members as it would have seemed to be a snub to the French. Russia was in the throes of industrialising at the time, a process mainly financed by French government loans and investments.

According to the author Edward Crankshaw, on the following day the tsar and tsarina made rounds of the hospitals where wounded survivors were being treated, and the tsar paid out of his own privy purse the sum of 1,000 roubles to the family of every victim.

John Withers, Burntwood



Martin Luther played a seminal role in Europe's Protestant Reformation, or should that be Revolution?

Luther's revolution

The 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's 'reformation' (*Europe's Holy War*, May), should, in fact, be referred to as a revolution. Firstly, it did not so much 'reform' the Catholic (Universal) church, apart from challenging the church's teaching regarding indulgences, and leading to the Catholic counter-reformation at the Council of Trent. Secondly, Luther espoused a revolutionary doctrine of 'justification by

faith' alone – it is only necessary to believe to be saved – in lieu of the traditional Catholic belief that we are saved by good faith and works.

Thirdly, Luther tried to undermine the papal authority as the successors of St Peter, which came directly from Christ himself, when he said to Peter: "You are Peter and upon this rock (*petram*) I shall build my church; and the gates of hell (*hades*) shall not prevail against it." [Matt. 16, 18].

President Kennedy meets US army officials during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. One of our readers was urged to turn up for work, even if the incident sparked nuclear war



The 16th-century Lutheran revolution was not only spiritual; in its consequences it was also political, leading to unforeseen polarisation of states and beliefs.

Dr Peter Hancock, Surrey

Nuclear absenteeism

The Cuban missile crisis is a particular personal memory (*The Nuclear 1980s*, April). As an apprentice, I was working in what is now called the Docklands. As the missiles were readied for possibly firing, the management posted a policy document on all noticeboards: "An impending nuclear war will not be accepted as an excuse for absenteeism."

James Wells, MRINA, Essex

Sex and sexism in history

In response to your article in the April issue, I would like to argue that the struggles faced by female historians in academia is an issue that needs to be addressed further. I'm currently a history student and can already relate to the prejudices faced by your panel. If asked, I would describe myself as a medieval sex historian, and this has definitely raised a few eyebrows. But pure criticism has mainly come from my male peers.

The funniest comment was when I was informed that I'd never get a boyfriend because of my chosen speciality, as it would be too embarrassing for anyone who dared date me! That's why I was so glad to read about your panellists facing similar prejudice. I had begun to feel like a career in history wasn't for me if I was already finding it hard to justify my academic interests.

But, after reading the article and listening to the podcast, I feel like I shouldn't have to justify myself. Your panellists showed me that the criticism I was receiving was not fair, but not anything new either. They themselves demonstrate that the only way to stop those comments is by proving them wrong.

Caroline Taylor, Southampton

WRITE TO US

We welcome your letters, while reserving the right to edit them. We may publish your letters on our website. Please include a daytime phone number and, if emailing, a postal address (not for publication). Letters should be no longer than 250 words.

email: letters@historyextra.com

Post: Letters, BBC History Magazine, Immediate Media Company Bristol Ltd, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN

SOCIAL MEDIA

What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook



Is it ever acceptable for dramas to alter historical events or characters to make them more engaging to audiences?

@b_hawk It's not only acceptable but also inevitable, probably necessary. We've been doing it for hundreds of years, every time we tell stories

@LeeDonaghy They shouldn't show things which are provably false or wrong, but filling in the blanks - if done sensitively and sensibly - is fine

@alcibiadesisace Absolutely as this could stimulate engagement and interest / research. Sometimes a hook is needed to inspire people!

@OPR_71 Reality always overcomes fantasy. Engaging with modern audiences is a mere excuse - altering events only proves lack of ability to expose history

Julie McGuire Is history ever 100% accurate? Historians have to rely on documents and accounts made by people who may have altered the facts themselves to suit their ends

Heike Wiechmann If I want my history fact-based I go to a lecture or watch a good documentary. A drama has artistic licence and should tell a good story. If it is also historically accurate, I consider it an added bonus

@tudor_geek As long as something doesn't claim to be a documentary or fact, then fill your boots! I know loads of people who have gone on to read the real history after watching a drama. That's always a good thing!

Barbara Sidor Schober I prefer they stick to the facts. Viewers believe what they see on TV and alternative facts become the real story to them

Robin Bullis It's fine to alter. It is a drama after all, not a documentary. I read plenty of historical fiction where fact and fiction are intertwined. Also, often 'facts' of history are in dispute, so how you tell the story may depend on which version is more compelling

Annette George Why would you need to? If you choose to make a drama of a historical character you chose to for a reason - they did something awful, fascinating or interesting. They could be as boring as anything but what they achieved is the point. That's the story, so tell it. Just stick to history!



Magna Carta man
Effigy of King John
(c1166–1216) in Worcester
Cathedral. The bad faith he
showed after Magna Carta
led to bloody civil wars with
many of his own barons

In the late 13th century, a rumour swept England that the **reviled King John** hadn't been killed by dysentery – as the historical record suggests – but an **assassin's poison**. Why did that alternative version of the king's death **gain so much traction**? And is it founded on truth?

By Laura Ashe

In October 1216 the king of England, travelling across country with what remained of his followers, stopped for a night's rest at the abbey of Swineshead, deep in the Lincolnshire Fens. It had been hard going and he'd lost half of his baggage train in the treacherous fenland.

The abbey was thrown into disarray by his arrival. Its residents scrambled to find accommodation and food for the king and his men, painfully aware that John brought civil war to their doorstep.

At the same time as the king demanded hospitality, Louis of France – attempting to seize John's kingdom at the head of a determined force of rebel English barons – was laying siege to Dover Castle. The French prince had already received the submission of London and Winchester, and besieged the castles at Windsor and Lincoln. John had not faced him in battle, retreating north in the hope of regrouping his forces.

The abbot would hardly have wanted to host John, even in better times. The king had a reputation for unpredictable cruelty and

malicious spite. It was widely rumoured that he had killed his nephew Arthur with his own hands – certainly the young prince, a rival claimant for the English throne, had died while in John's keeping.

The king had a nasty habit of demanding hostages from his own nobles as a guarantee of their loyalty. In 1208 one noblewoman, Matilda de Briouze, had refused to hand over her eldest son for fear that he would meet the same fate as Arthur. Within two years the family had been destroyed. Matilda's husband was outlawed and forced into exile, where he died. John arrested and imprisoned Matilda and her son, and starved them to death.

Sitting at dinner in Swineshead Abbey, John asked a wary monk how much a loaf of bread cost. No more than a halfpenny, he was told, and the king smiled humourlessly. "What good value," he murmured. "But if I live, in half a year's time this same loaf will cost as much as 20 shillings. I swear it." The monk was aghast. John's remark made no sense – or if it did, it meant famine and starvation, the ruin of his people. He stared at



A remnant from 'Bad' King John's gold embroidered burial shroud, held in Worcester Cathedral Library

The death of King John

the king, and thought he would rather die than witness John's threat come to pass.

The monk went to his abbot and was confessed of his sins. Then he went into the abbey garden and found a toad – the only source of poison he could think of. He pricked the toad with a brooch pin, and gathered the white fluid that oozed out of its skin into a cup. Then he filled the cup with strong ale and took it to the king, offering him the old English toast: “wassail!” Ever suspicious, John told the monk to drink first, and he did. Then John drank.

Bufotoxin, the poison produced by toads, can stop the heart or set it racing. It causes nausea, vomiting, seizures, pain and hallucinations – and death. There is no known antidote. The monk left the king and went directly to the abbey infirmary. In great pain, John demanded to know where he was and received the news that the monk had died.

John's murder was seen as an act of **national salvation, the just punishment of a tyrant**, carried out by a patriotic subject

The king panicked and demanded that they bind up his swollen stomach. Hours later, he too was dead.

So goes the story of King John's untimely death, as told in the *Brut Chronicle* of English history, written towards the end of the 13th century. As the pages of the *Brut* tell us, the king was remembered as a hated figure, a tyrant, the man who had been made to seal Magna Carta and then tried to annul it, denying the English their ancient rights of justice and the law.

But John's sudden demise marked a turning point – a dramatic change in the course of the civil war between the rebel barons and the king's supporters. Men who had despaired of John were willing to back the cause of his son Henry, who was nine years old. And when Prince Louis' forces were defeated at the battle of Lincoln in 1217, Louis was paid to renounce his claim and return to France.

The rebels pledged allegiance to Henry III, and were forgiven. Magna Carta was reissued in the new king's name and it became iconic in English politics, repeatedly reissued by Henry III and later kings, enforced by rebellious barons. It was a potent symbol of the limitations of royal power, the refusal of the English people ever to submit to tyranny.

The act of a hero

Without John's death, everything might have been different. By killing his king, the anonymous monk released England from the clutches of a tyrant, and opened the way to a new settlement, a permanent shift in the balance of power between the king and his people. It was the act of a hero: bravely undertaken for the greater good.

But John wasn't murdered. It's true that he visited Swineshead Abbey on his last journey. But he was sick, with dysentery, and struggled on as far as Newark, where he died on the night of 18/19 October, after making a will and nominating a council to support the claims of his son Henry. One historian writing at the time said that John had made himself ill with his “pernicious gluttony”. Others, writing in the following decade, declared that John's death was the inevitable judgment of God on his sins. But they all agreed on one thing: King John died of dysentery in Newark.

And yet when the vivid story of John's murder at the hands of the Swineshead monk appeared in the chronicles, perhaps 50 years later, it was suddenly everywhere – in histories written in Latin, French and English; in popular stories, poems and songs. One learned Latin historian in the 14th century said that, while John had died at Newark, “popular rumour” believed otherwise, and then he told the whole tale in detail. Even the historian



God's king John's coronation in 1199, depicted in *Flores Historiarum* (1250–52). Kings were considered God's earthly representative, a power John wielded ruthlessly and without scruples



Cursed cup King John regards a drink, proffered by a Lincolnshire monk, with suspicion. The notion that the king died from toad poison administered by a monk quickly caught fire with a population eager to celebrate the move away from John's tyrannical rule

who knew it to be false couldn't resist it – and many others simply presented it as fact. A sumptuously illustrated manuscript created towards the end of the 13th century, now in the British Library, depicts the kings of England from Edward the Confessor to Edward I. In its picture of John (shown above), the king stares suspiciously at the poisoned cup proffered by a nervous monk.

John's murder had become the defining event of his reign: the just punishment of a tyrant, and an act of national salvation, carried out by a patriotic subject.

Righteous rebels?

The success of this story is important, and revealing. That's because it tells us just as much about the English people's evolving attitudes towards their kings, as it does about the death of John.

Kings were anointed with holy oil at their coronation. They were God's representatives on Earth, placed in supreme authority to rule over their subjects. When John faced his baronial opponents he was supported by the pope, who excommunicated the rebels for resisting their rightful king.

But the rebels did not believe that they were doing wrong. They had renounced their homage to John in response to his abuses – his arbitrary exactions and punishments, his manipulation of the laws to destroy those who opposed him, his refusal to accept the counsel

and advice of his greatest magnates. They had offered their allegiance to Louis, an alternative claimant – a man of royal blood, married to a granddaughter of Henry II – because of their belief in the essential nature of kingship. The rebels could not envisage England without a king. But they demanded that their king uphold law and justice.

The events of John's reign were a beginning, the start of real resistance to abuses of kingship. There had been wars before, but they had always been openly self-interested, a matter of rival claimants' attempts to seize power for themselves. Now, for the first time, the English went to war over an idea of what English government and kingship should be.

As the 13th century wore on, this idea of kingship – authority by consent of the people, subject to the laws enshrined in Magna Carta – became embedded in English politics. Political awareness spread far beyond the royal court and the greatest nobility: people in every town, village and parish church heard Magna Carta proclaimed, and they expected the king to uphold it.

Now, for the first time,
the English went to
war over an **idea of
what English
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kingship** should be

Guttering flames

In 1253 Henry III had been repeatedly denied grants of taxation by parliament, and he was forced to reassert his support of the charter. He and all the great men of the realm pronounced an oath that placed a sentence of excommunication on anyone who broke the

The death of King John



Brutal end Simon de Montfort is slain and dismembered at Evesham on 4 August 1265 by forces loyal to Prince Edward (the future Edward I). De Montfort had called for kings to be stripped of unlimited authority and for ordinary citizens to be permitted as representatives in parliament

terms of Magna Carta. Standing in a circle holding lit candles, they threw them to the ground, so that the flames guttered out and smoke rose from the floor, while bells were rung. "So let any who break this oath be extinguished and stink in hell," they intoned. The king made his own promise: "So help me God, I will faithfully keep all these things inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a crowned and anointed king." This pronouncement was read out in all the parish churches in England, so that everyone in the land could hear it.

Yet no matter how earnest Henry's promises and pronouncements, they weren't enough to placate his persistently rebellious barons. And when opposition to his rule finally coalesced into the Barons' Wars of the 1260s, ordinary people – far more politically active than they were at the beginning of the century – joined the cause. As the two sides squared up in an increasingly bitter conflict, the barons' leader, Simon de Montfort, was heralded as a saviour of the English people. And when the barons defeated the king's forces at the battle of Lewes in 1264, a long poem celebrated their victory, describing how they had "fought for England" against Henry's tyranny and injustice.

Martyrdom of a rebel

But the rebels' triumph was short-lived. The following year, at the battle of Evesham, the royalists exacted revenge, slaughtering Simon de Montfort and many of his supporters on the field. Such was the enmity between the combatants that Montfort's body was mutilated and torn apart. The king's forces then pursued and killed as many rebels as they could. One witness wrote of the slaughter of a group who had sought sanctuary in a church, remarking that the floor was so deep in blood it flowed down into the crypt.

The horrors of 1265 lodged themselves in popular memory for a very long time. As late as the following century, poems and songs lamenting the loss of Simon de Montfort were

copied into manuscripts. This had not just been a struggle between powerful noblemen. Village preachers had taken up the cause and farmers and tradesmen had joined in battle alongside their lords. A few days after Evesham, villagers of Peatling Magna, a small parish in Leicestershire, attacked the royalist baggage train, accusing the party of "treason and other heinous offences because they were against the welfare of the community of the realm and against the barons".

De Montfort was hailed as a martyr, a man who had died in a holy cause, fighting for the English people. His death was a shocking break with custom. Not since the battle of Hastings in 1066 had any great English nobleman been killed on the field of battle. Now, powerful men were putting themselves in mortal danger, dying for "the whole community of the realm". It was the most potent of ideas, and it changed English history.

So English politics looked very different by the time the story of John's murder appeared in the chronicles, 60 or 70 years after his death. No longer the preserve of a tiny minority of the nobility, the institution of parliament was growing in power and reach, while public awareness of matters of governance, law and justice had penetrated to every town and village in the country, to every parish church, smithy, pub and market square. The tale of John's poisoning must have come from those places, from ordinary people, in conversations long lost to us.

Within 100 years
of John's death,
the English people
had come to **believe**
they had the right
to judge their king

It began as a rumour, was elaborated and circulated. It gained in details and in drama – and then, finally, it reached into the written record. It was a direct contradiction of known history, but was a tale too compelling to ignore, too convincing to dismiss.

When Edward II was crowned in 1308, he was made to swear a new oath to his people: "To maintain and preserve the laws and rightful customs which the community of the realm shall have chosen." Within two months, enraged with Edward's promotion of his favourite, Piers Gaveston, the Earl of Lincoln led the barons of the realm in a statement of their position: "Honour and oath of allegiance are more in respect of the crown than in respect of the king's person." If the king should fail to honour the dignity of the crown, if he appears "not to be guided by reason", then their duty is to the crown, not to the king. Two years later, the barons added that "unless the king granted their requests they would not have him for king", for "with the breaker of faith, faith may be broken".

In 1327 Edward II was deposed by parliament, with the consent of "all the people". The medal struck to mark his young son Edward III's coronation bore a new legend: *Populi dat iura voluntas*: 'The will of the people makes the law.' The people of England had come to believe they had the right to judge their king – just as they had created, and believed, the story that one anonymous monk had judged and executed a king more than a century before. **II**

Laura Ashe specialises in the literature, history and culture of medieval England at the University of Oxford. Her books include *Richard II: A Brittle Glory* (Allen Lane, 2016)

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A black and white photograph of a young boy, John Clem, in a military uniform. He is standing and holding a drum. The uniform is dark with light-colored stripes on the sleeves and a high collar. He has a serious expression.

Innocence under fire

From medieval times to the modern day, young children have been put to tragic use in warfare. **Emma Butcher and James Rogers** tell their story

John Clem, a Union army drummer boy during the American Civil War, rose to fame after he shot a colonel who was trying to apprehend him

1 Children of "hard flesh"

Wrenched from their homes at the age of seven, Sparta's boys were battle-ready by 20

The ancient Greek city of Sparta was a military superpower, and its children were enveloped within this fighting ethos from a very early age. Soon after birth, a council of inspectors would judge a male infant's physical attributes; if he was deemed unfit, the baby would most likely be abandoned on a nearby hillside. At the age of seven, Spartan boys were removed from their parents' homes and conscripted into the 'agoge', a military training scheme. The first-century AD Roman historian Plutarch detailed their regime: "Their training was calculated to make them obey commands well, endure hardships and conquer in battle... When they were 12 years old, they no longer had tunics to wear, received one cloak a year, had hard flesh and knew little of baths."

Despite the boys' early military education, the Spartans didn't entertain the concept of a child army. From a practical perspective, children weren't strong enough to handle the heavy weapons of the time. Instead, the youthful recruits served by conducting menial chores, such as bearing shields and mats for the more senior warriors. It was only when he turned 20 years old that a Spartan man would be deemed fit to serve as a soldier of the state.



King Leonidas I, like most Spartan boys, had to complete harsh 'agoge' military training as a child



This engraving shows a 30,000-strong army of children marching towards the Holy Land in 1212. Their aim was to convert Muslims to Christianity

2 The fearless fledglings of God

Armed with the gospel, a young Christian army set off on a crusade to Jerusalem. It turned out to be mission impossible

In 1212, around 30,000 children from across Europe banded together and marched towards Jerusalem. Although the facts are marred by mythology and a lack of historical sources, we know that their aim was to peacefully convert Muslims to Christianity. Versions of the story – over 50 of which have been found dating back to the 13th century – tell us of various child leaders marching to the Holy Land.

One was a young French boy, Stephen of Cloyes, who believed he'd been chosen by Jesus to lead the divine mission. He gathered followers by performing miracles and portents,

and claiming that the Mediterranean Sea would part for his followers on their journey. Across the continent, droves of children joined the cause, taking the crusader's vow, which was both militant and legally binding.

Sadly, their mission was to end in disaster. Once the band of children reached the coast and the sea remained unmoved, those who chose to continue their journey on ships were either taken to Tunisia and sold into slavery or died in shipwrecks. Despite their failure, however, their quest could be considered as the first mass European youth movement.

3 Noble warriors

Boy pages were often seen on medieval battlefields and were deadly with a crossbow

In medieval Europe, boy pages were a regular sight in the homes of aristocrats. At the age of seven, noble boys would be sent from their family homes and stationed in another aristocratic household, where they would dutifully serve the lord of the estate through menial chores and personal service. In return, they received hospitality and education. They also underwent military training, learning how to use weapons and ride. The children would mount wooden horses, learn how to handle lances and conduct target practice.

Boy pages witnessed their fair share of conflict, dressing and arming their lords on the field. They mainly performed minor auxiliary roles but, in the event of a siege, were expected to know the basics of how to defend a castle with a crossbow. This was one of only a few weapons a child could use; the string could be pulled back with a lever, or by winding a crank, giving the bow tension, power and the ability to travel long distances – all of which meant a child could kill without engaging in direct combat with an adult. Despite their military training, even in the heat of battle it was bad form to consider the boys a target. In the 1415 battle of Agincourt, it is rumoured that Henry V was so enraged by the French targeting his army's boy pages, that he retaliated by slitting the necks of his prisoners.

Crossbows, as shown in this c1310 illumination, were one of the few weapons children could use



AKG IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN



This 1558 painting shows children captured by the Ottomans dressed in red to identify them in the event of an escape

4 Trained to die for their sultan masters

As the Ottoman empire flourished, non-Muslim children were rounded up and forced into military slavery

Between the 14th and 19th centuries, the Ottoman empire trained elite infantry units known as Janissaries. These units were populated by strong children, aged 7–18, who had either been kidnapped from local non-Muslim families or taken during military campaigns against Christian communities. This system of abduction and enlistment became known as 'devshirme', which is Ottoman Turkish for 'lifting' or 'collecting'.

Upon capture, the children were dressed in red so that they would be recognised in the event of an escape.

They would then be circumcised and converted to Islam. As the sultan's personal slaves, the children were trained for a life of service; indoctrinated to fight and die for their master. They were known in society as 'kapikulu', servants who were neither free nor ordinary slaves.

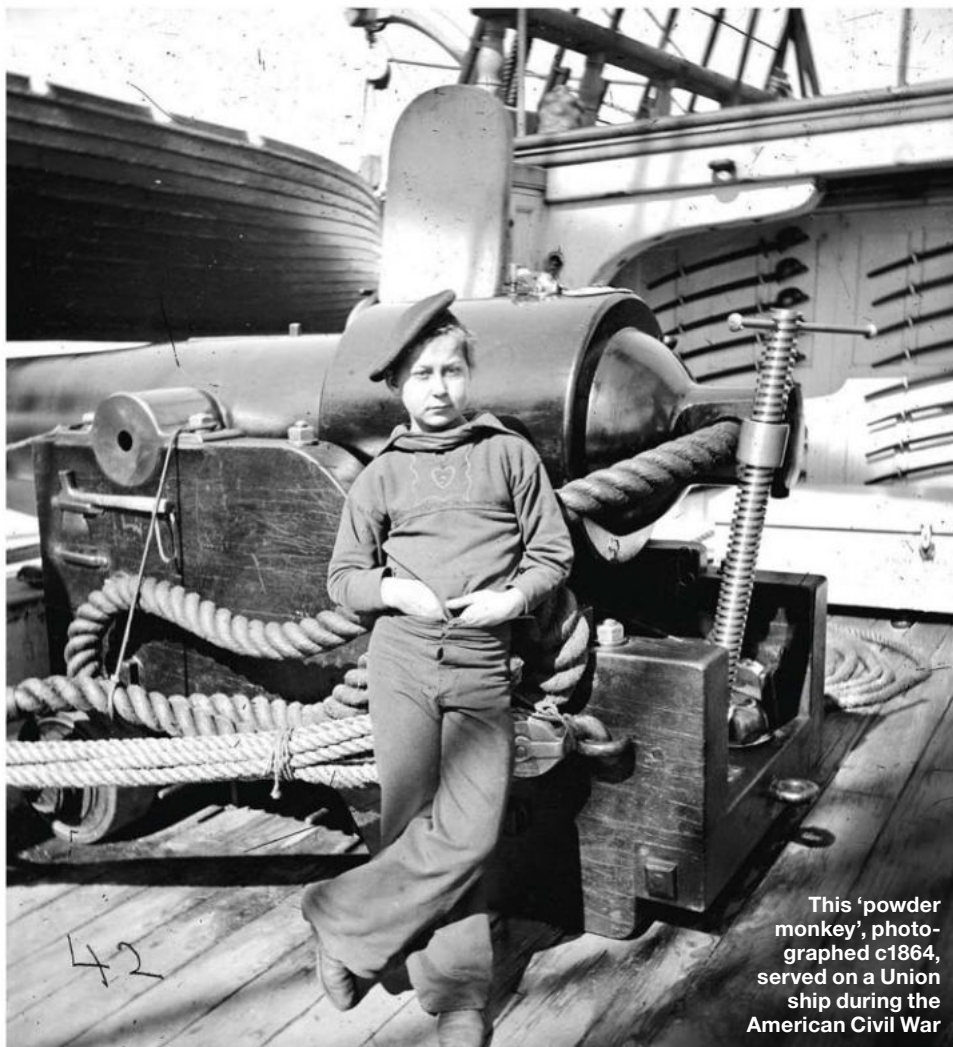
Over the centuries, Janissaries were used in all major campaigns, including the 1453 capture of Constantinople and the Battle of Mohács in 1526. Despite their life in captivity, many considered their high standing in the Ottoman administration an honour.

5 In the powder keg of war

Children endured tough conditions while serving in some of history's most famous naval battles

The British Royal Navy first began using the term 'powder monkey' in the 17th century. In the golden age of sail, young boys would be recruited or press-ganged to service artillery guns on warships. Their job was to ferry gunpowder from the magazine in the ship's hold to the gun crews. It was a dangerous job: gun carriages would regularly dismount and maim crewmembers, scalding iron rained from misfired guns and giant splinters would penetrate flesh.

Brief autobiographical accounts from powder monkeys survive. One such account is from a boy named Robert Sands, who worked on Admiral Nelson's ship during the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. He explained that "the smoke sofecated us... our skreens took fire and burnt the Leftanant of mereans [marines] badley. I had jest left thair wen the exploschon took place. The men inside the skreens was burnt to deth... Then I had to go to the fore magesene for my powder." Despite his age and lower-class status, Sands' unlikely memoir is one of the few accounts that exist from the battle.



This 'powder monkey', photographed c1864, served on a Union ship during the American Civil War



A drummer boy, c1861. Boys as young as nine learnt dozens of drum patterns that helped keep order on the battlefield

6 Beating hearts

Historically, drummer boys have played a central role on the battlefield, especially in the American Civil War

The use of drummer boys on the battlefield has been a longstanding western tradition. These musical mascots had a practical role to play, using different drum rolls to enable officers and troops to communicate with each other.

Despite their wide-spanning history, drummer boys have become synonymous with 19th-century American warfare: sentimental poetry, art, sculpture and autobiography from the era juxtaposed these innocent children with sweeping battlescapes.

The American Civil War propelled drummer boys to semi-celebrity status. The youngest recruit of the war, nine-year-old John Clem, rose to fame after he opened fire

on a Confederate colonel who'd ordered him to surrender, and managed to escape. 'The Drummer Boy of Chickamauga', as he became known, was subsequently promoted to sergeant, making him the youngest soldier ever to become a non-commissioned officer in the US army.

Other notable Civil War drummer boys include 13-year-old Charles King, the youngest recruit to be killed in the war; 12-year-old William Black, who lost his left arm during battle; and Louis Edward Rafield, who inspired the sentimental Confederate song 'The Drummer Boy of Shiloh', written by Will S Hays in 1863:

*On Shiloh's dark and bloody ground
The dead and wounded lay;
Amongst them was a drummer boy,
Who beat the drum that day.*

7 The teenage Tommies

Children as young as 12 and 13 lied about their age to fight for Britain in the First World War

During the First World War, British youth movements such as the Boy Scouts, the Sea Scouts and the Girl Guides militarised the youth of the nation and provided them with practical medical and survival skills. These children were quick to volunteer their services. One such child, nine-year-old Alfie Knight, pleaded with the then-secretary of state for war, Lord Kitchener, to let him join the army: "I want to go to the front. I can ride jolley quick on my bicycle, and would go as a despatch rider. I wouldnt let the Germans get it." Kitchener replied to thank the lad, but noted that he was a little too young to fight.

Many young boys did, however, find their way into the army. Approximately 250,000 British soldiers were under the legal age limit of 19. The youngest recognised soldier was 12-year-old Sidney Lewis, who fought in the battle of the Somme. Another young recruit, 13-year-old George Maher, lied about his age and was sent to the front line. His true age was revealed after he was found crying during heavy shelling.

Punch magazine satirised this epidemic of willing youths with a cartoon. In it, an officer points to a young boy in a soldier's uniform and booms: "Do you know where boys go who tell lies?" The applicant replies: "To the front, sir."

GETTY IMAGES



A Brownie and Cub Scout – in a replica of his father's military uniform – serving as messengers, 1916

In their SS uniforms, the young recruits looked little different to their adult colleagues, and the Soviets showed them no mercy



8 Hitler's final hope

Only lightly trained, the youthful soldiers recruited to support the Nazis' last stand were essentially cannon fodder

The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were among the primary tools used by the Nazi regime to control Germany's future generation. Despite the compulsory gender roles attributed to each movement, the militant rhetoric that implored young subjects to devote themselves to the strength and defence of the 'Fatherland' was similar.

The Hitler Youth received only quasi-military training as part of their political programme, learning how to march, drill, throw grenades, dig trenches and escape through barbed wire reels under pistol fire. And when they were ordered to join the fight against Allied forces in the final months of the war, the boys were woefully inexperienced

and ill-prepared. They were sent out in lightly armed ambush squads, fulfilling their vow to "be ready as a brave soldier, to stake my life at any time for this oath". Fifteen-year-old Heinz Shuetze was put in an SS uniform and sent to fight Soviet forces on the front line after being given just half a day's training. He was armed with a panzerfaust, an anti-tank rocket.

A survivor from some of the Soviet confrontations, Guenter Dullni, noted: "They [the Soviets] had no mercy for child soldiers, particularly when you were slapped into an SS uniform."

Tragically, many of the children who lost their lives in battle were sent to fight after the fate of the war had effectively been decided.

9 Young guns

How the proliferation of assault rifles gave birth to a new breed of child warriors

While children were once of little use in combat roles, the invention of assault rifles like the Kalashnikov and the M-16 – smaller, lighter and with less recoil than previous guns – has enabled youngsters to be deployed as deadly ‘soldiers’. The Cold War marked the emergence of this trend, El Salvador in the 1980s being a prime example. Fighting between government troops and the rebel FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) resulted in the kidnap and rape of children, but also their conscription into the military by both sides. It’s reported that more than one in five of the FMLN’s troops were children, while 80 per cent of the government’s forces were under 18. In other words, children fighting children.

The FMLN would send ‘kids units’ into villages to recruit even younger children, but also deployed them in active fighting. The government forces reportedly sent children to kill or injure members of their own family to ‘prove’ their loyalty. Like the FMLN, they also used children in overt active combat roles. One former child soldier recalled “eight-year-olds carrying M-16s and losing their whole families”.



A young girl wields an M-16 assault rifle, El Salvador, 1984

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES



A child fighter in the streets of Liberia’s capital, Monrovia, 1996

10 “Eyes wide, screaming in pain, fear and hatred”

Child soldiers in recent conflicts in Africa have been forced to participate in a number of terrible atrocities

The impact of child soldiers was ramped up to brutal new levels during the African civil wars of the 1990s, with mercenaries, gangs, arms dealers, militias and weakened governments all incorporating children into their ranks. In Liberia, ‘Small Boys Units’ were frequently used by the warlord/president Charles Taylor. Armed with Uzis or AK-47s, children would be used to engage against UN peacekeepers, pillage and plunder communities, or commit mass atrocities. One former child soldier recalled “the scent of gunpowder, eyes stinging from smoke, your friend crying... it was terrible. I missed my mother at that moment.”

Children were also used by the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) to take part in the country’s devastating 1994 genocide. Boys aged 14 and younger, many of them orphaned and desperate for protection, were drugged, kidnapped and sold,

then forced to act as combatants taking part in rape, mutilation and the killing of civilians. A staggering 800,000 people were murdered in the space of just 100 days. As the commander of the UN mission in Rwanda said at the time: “Those child soldiers’ eyes were wide and brilliant, screaming in pain and anguish, fear and hatred.” For these fresh-faced fighters, the innocence of youth is short-lived. **H**

Emma Butcher is a BBC/AHRC New Generation Thinker 2017. James Rogers is associate lecturer in international politics at the University of York. They are both investigators on the Wellcome-funded project, ‘Legacies of War Trauma’

ON THE PODCAST

Emma Butcher discusses child soldiers on our weekly podcast ► historyextra.com/podcasts

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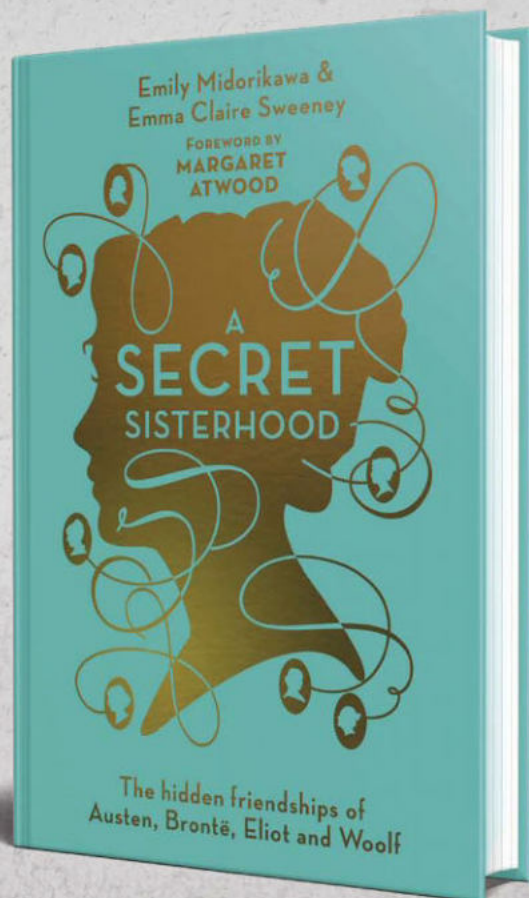
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CAPTURED, DEPORTED, HUMILIATED, **VICTORIOUS...**

The incredible tale of the Poles who fought back

In 1940, thousands of Poles were deported to Siberia and left to rot in Stalin's gulags. Four years later, they were taking the fight to the Nazis in Italy. **Monica Whitlock** has spoken to some of the survivors of a wartime odyssey

Accompanies a BBC World Service documentary on 'Anders' army'





Standing proud

Polish civilians and soldiers stand side by side for Holy Mass in Kyrgyzstan, 1942. Survivors of the Soviet invasion of Poland, they went on to form an invaluable army in the struggle against Germany

Behind the Jala photography shop in Isfahan, Iran stands an old outbuilding. It is filled with boxes of glass negatives taken by Abdolqasem Jala, a brilliant photographer in the middle of the 20th century.

The plates, surprisingly intact, include portraits of Polish people who found refuge here during the Second World War.

Most of the negatives show women and children, including some of the 13,000 Polish orphans who lived in Isfahan. A few of these orphans are still alive. "To us, Iran was a paradise," remembers Henrika Levchenko, who married and settled in the Middle East. "People were so kind. Iran was a wonderful

place, after everything we had been through."

Henrika is one of around 1 million men, women and children deported from Poland by the Soviet authorities in 1941. They were sent to labour camps in the USSR and later dispersed around the world, founding the Polish communities that we know today, from Tel Aviv to London to Melbourne. For decades, the story of their odyssey was hardly known. In Poland, it did not fit the wartime narrative generated under communism. Abroad, immigrants finding their feet had neither time nor appetite to look back. Many deportees concealed their stories even from their own children.

This missing history is now emerging, through the testimony of survivors and

evidence scattered around the world. A pile of gramophone records, a cinema poster, a suitcase of letters – all are clues being assembled by scholars and by a new generation of Poles eager to make sense of their past.

Poland pulverised

On 17 September 1939, Soviet troops invaded Poland – 16 days after Nazi Germany launched its deadly strike, devastating the populations of western Poland and pulverising Warsaw. Under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, the latter laid claim to the eastern borderlands. This region comprised prosperous cities like Vilnius, Białostok and Lviv, surrounded by forests and farmland.

The Second World War

The diverse population included a high proportion of Jewish people, swelling by the day as Jewish families from across Nazi-occupied Europe fled east.

Rounded up

Within weeks of occupying eastern Poland, the Soviets started arresting local people by the tens of thousands to prevent potential resistance.

Danuta Gradosielska, now of Forest Gate, London, was then a farmer's daughter in Rivne. She was 14 when the NKVD, the Soviet political police, knocked at the door at 6am on 10 February 1940. Danuta remembers raised voices as the Soviets ordered her parents to be ready in half an hour. The family took what they could – food, warm clothes and blankets – and bundled on to a sledge.

Hundreds of families were gathered around Lyubomyrka station. "We were put on a cargo train," recalls Danuta. "Seventy-two people in each wagon. There was a hole in the floor for a toilet. There were planks to sleep on, like shelves. I climbed up to the top plank and lay looking out through a grating. When we crossed the border out of Poland we all sang the national anthem, *Poland Is Not Yet Lost*. I watched Russia going by: just empty spaces and snow."

The journey was brutal. "The guard would throw the dead babies into the snow," recalls Danuta. "When an adult died, they'd put the body on a platform by the engine. When the train slowed, they'd push them off. But the children they just threw away." Elizabeth Piekarski from Vilnius remembers a mother with two boys stirring grain over a camping stove. "The children drew closer and closer. The train jolted and the little one fell into the stove. He burnt to death. The guard grabbed his heel and swung him out of the door."

Unknowable numbers of the elderly, the ill and young children were dead by the time the trains reached Siberia two weeks later.

The Memorial Society of Krasnoyarsk records four deportations arriving in Siberia from February 1940 to June 1941. First came the officers of the Polish army, forestry workers and farmers with their families. Then followed fugitives, including Polish, Czech and Austrian Jews. Families of prisoners came next and then Ukrainians. The Polish deportees spent the next 18 months in labour camps mainly in Siberia and Kazakhstan.

Elizabeth cannot bear to think of all the bitter labour she endured as a teenager. Once



Danuta Gradosielska was 14 years old when she was deported and sent to work in a gulag

she was detailed to cut reeds in a marsh. "They left us with no food for two weeks. Nothing. So one of the boys climbed a tree and pulled some baby birds out of their nest. We tried to warm them in marsh water before we ate them."

Elizabeth's younger sister was sent down the coal mines in Karaganda, where only small children could squeeze into the tunnels. She survived an underground explosion that left shards of coal in her body for the rest of her life. But the corrosive dust that coated her lungs would eventually kill her.

Danuta and her family were sent into silent forests where they were put to logging, living in huts that had been part of the old gulag. There was no perimeter wire as there was nowhere to run. Many simply died of hunger. Danuta remembers one nearby family with seven children, all but one of whom starved to death.

Beaten and burned

The stories of Elizabeth and Danuta represent hundreds of thousands of others. Deportees young and old carried notebooks and sketch pads in which they described and drew their experiences. One bundle of drawings and writings comes from Edward Herzbaum, discovered in a suitcase by his astonished family only after his death.

Edward, aged 19, was alone. He was Jewish and his mother had sent him east for his protection. When the NKVD picked him up in Lviv they burnt him with cigarettes, beat him and sent him to a gulag camp near Yaroslavl. Edward cheated death time and time again. "I cannot surrender to these pigs," he wrote. "I will not die among those thugs who would then laugh. When we go to hell, nobody will ever know how we died."

But then everything changed. Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, smashing the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The Polish deportees, at a stroke, became Soviet allies.

"Suddenly a rumour spread through the crowd about some kind of agreement with the Polish government, concerning the creation of a Polish army and the releasing of all war prisoners and inmates," wrote Edward Herzbaum. "How wildly happy I would be to go to the front, to die there, but not here."

The Polish prime minister in exile, General Sikorski, chose General Władysław Anders to lead this implausible army out of the USSR. Anders was in prison in Moscow. Released,



Our map shows some of the locations on Anders' army's gruelling journey across Europe and Asia

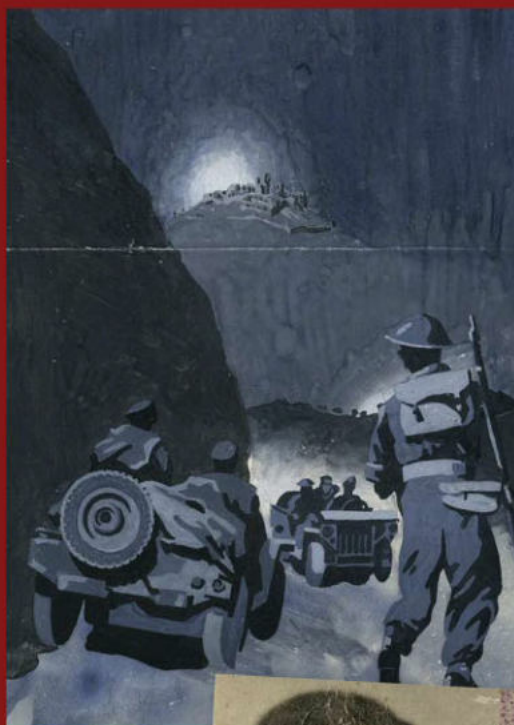


ABOVE: Polish deportees released from labour camps wait in the Soviet town of Buzuluk to enlist in the newly formed Polish army, 1941

RIGHT: Troops are inspected by General Sosnkowski, commander-in-chief of the Polish forces, accompanied by General Anders, 1944

BELOW: Polish women on guard duty in Iraq, c1942. Female members of Anders' army also drove trucks loaded with ammunition and supplies





RIGHT: Edward Herzbaum, aged 19. His record of the horrific treatment of deportees was found after his death
ABOVE: Edward's painting of the assault on Monte Cassino, 1944



The Poles in their **hundreds of thousands were crammed into trains** for a journey 2,500 miles south

he headed for central Asia on the southern Soviet border. The Poles in their hundreds of thousands crammed into trains for a journey of up to 4,000 miles south. Many died of typhoid on the way. Uzbek villagers recall opening the train doors and the corpses toppling out like logs.

Danuta, now aged 16, made it to Tashkent. She added two years to her age and joined up. She embroidered a white Polish eagle on her uniform and stuffed her huge boots with straw so they would stay on.

The army that mustered near Tashkent was like no other in modern times: soldiers, many in their teens, with all their dependants and more than 10,000 orphans. All these people were famished, typhoid-ridden and disorientated.

The blazing beauty of central Asia intensified Edward Herzbaum's unhappiness. "We will regret the fine days, the sunshine and our young years. We should somehow keep it in our memory, but we can't... one day maybe we will want to recreate it and we won't be able to."

Surviving superstars

Other Poles stranded in the USSR joined in. Among them was the fabulously talented musician Henryk Wars. Henryk had scored 50 or more of the biggest films in prewar Warsaw. The Nazis had rounded up many of his circle, including the brilliant dance-music composer Arthur Gold. Arthur would be murdered at Treblinka. His brother (also Henryk) escaped and joined Anders, along with Henryk and other surviving superstars.

General Anders led the Poles across the Soviet frontier in the spring of 1942. Approximately 115,000 people boarded creaking barges at Krasnovodsk and chugged across the Caspian Sea to the Iranian port of Anzali. For 639 Poles this was the end of the journey. They were brought ashore dead, or they died on the beach.

The British Army was ready to meet the Poles with mass disinfection tents and lorries for the journey to Tehran. From there the

Polish troops scrambled to the summit at Monte Cassino and **raised their flag over the rubble**

non-combatants were sent mainly to Isfahan. Some of the orphans would later move on to India and east Africa. Military and medical staff trained in Tehran before travelling to Iraq and then Palestine to join the Allied north African campaign.

Finest hour

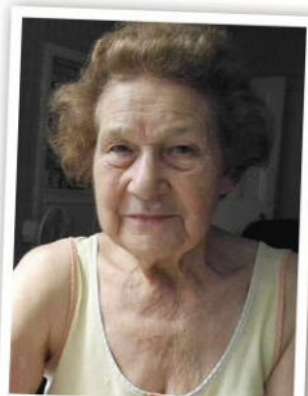
Danuta became one of 600 or so Polish women and girls in the all-female 316 Transport Company. "I drove a three-tonne Dodge. I was very small so I folded a blanket and sat on it so I could see over the wheel. The men were amazed to see us girls driving the lorries." Danuta delivered ammunition, petrol, food and troops all over Egypt.

Several hundred Jewish Polish soldiers left the corps in Palestine, including the future prime minister of Israel, Menachim Begin. These people joined the community of Poles who had left for Palestine before the war. "All the cafes and bars were Polish and they all wanted to treat us," remembers Elizabeth. "It was like home, like being in Poland."

Edward Herzbaum wrote: "We have become a little closer to the world in which we used to live before the war and therefore we are now more like our old selves in the time before Russia, but it doesn't mean that I'm closer to my past. The opposite is true... The way I am now, I don't fit into this old world any more and I fit into the new one even less."

The Poles served in Egypt, from where they sailed to Sorrento to take part in the Italian campaign, under the title of the Polish II Corps. For many of these men and women, what happened next became the defining moment of their wartime lives. They were dispatched to Monte Cassino, where the armies of many

Danuta Gradosielska pictured today in London. Few of the deportees returned to Poland after the war



Troops of the II Corps throw grenades during their successful assault on Monte Cassino, 1944

Allied nations had fought three battles to break German positions around a Benedictine monastery perched on a rocky hill. Monte Cassino anchored the defensive Gustav line and so guarded the road to Rome.

The fourth battle, General Sir Harold Alexander's Operation Diadem, was intended to encircle the hilltop, prising out the Germans from the valley beneath. The role of the Poles was to isolate the monastery and push around it until they connected with a British force. General Anders led his men into battle with a shattering artillery bombardment on the night of 11 May 1944. The week-long battle that ensued has been described as a Verdun in miniature, with ferocious fighting, some of it hand-to-hand, at Snakeshead Ridge above the monastery.

Despite ferocious German resistance, the Polish and British armies connected on 18 May, the Poles scrambling to the summit and raising their flag over the rubble. But their victory had come at a huge cost – the II Corps had lost more than a thousand men. Elizabeth, a Red Cross nurse, served throughout Monte Cassino, doing what she could for the injured and dying. Casualties came in so fast that the ratio to nurses was 100 to one.

Monte Cassino went down as General Anders' finest hour. Poland was occupied, broken, in ruins. But in Monte Cassino the battered Polish flag still flew.

Few of the II Corps returned to Poland to live after the German surrender in 1945. The Yalta conference had severed eastern Poland and absorbed it into Soviet Ukraine and Lithuania. All plans, all

futures were derailed.

Few families emerged unscathed. Danuta's sister Zosia had died of pneumonia in Siberia in 1940. Edward Herzbaum's mother perished in the Łódź ghetto in 1943. The Soviet NKVD murdered Elizabeth's father at Katyn, although this was not acknowledged until 1990. In some families no one was left at all.

Life after war

The Poles set out to make new lives. Some sailed to the United States, others to Australia, Canada or South Africa. The composer Henryk Wars went to the US, resuming his career, with the support of Ira Gershwin, scoring films for Columbia, Universal and Twentieth Century Fox.

Danuta married a Polish officer in Italy. They set off to Britain where she brought up six children and where she still lives.

Elizabeth was demobbed in Scotland. "They gave the men a suit and the women got a length of material," she said. "And that was it! Goodbye, all the very best."

Edward Herzbaum also headed for Britain, where he became an architect. "And now I am close to the end," he wrote. "It seems strange that this letter will one day go out into the fog – a long, long way – and one day you, so far away, will read it." **II**

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Monica Whitlock is a radio journalist specialising in the former USSR. She worked for the BBC for 20 years as a correspondent and producer

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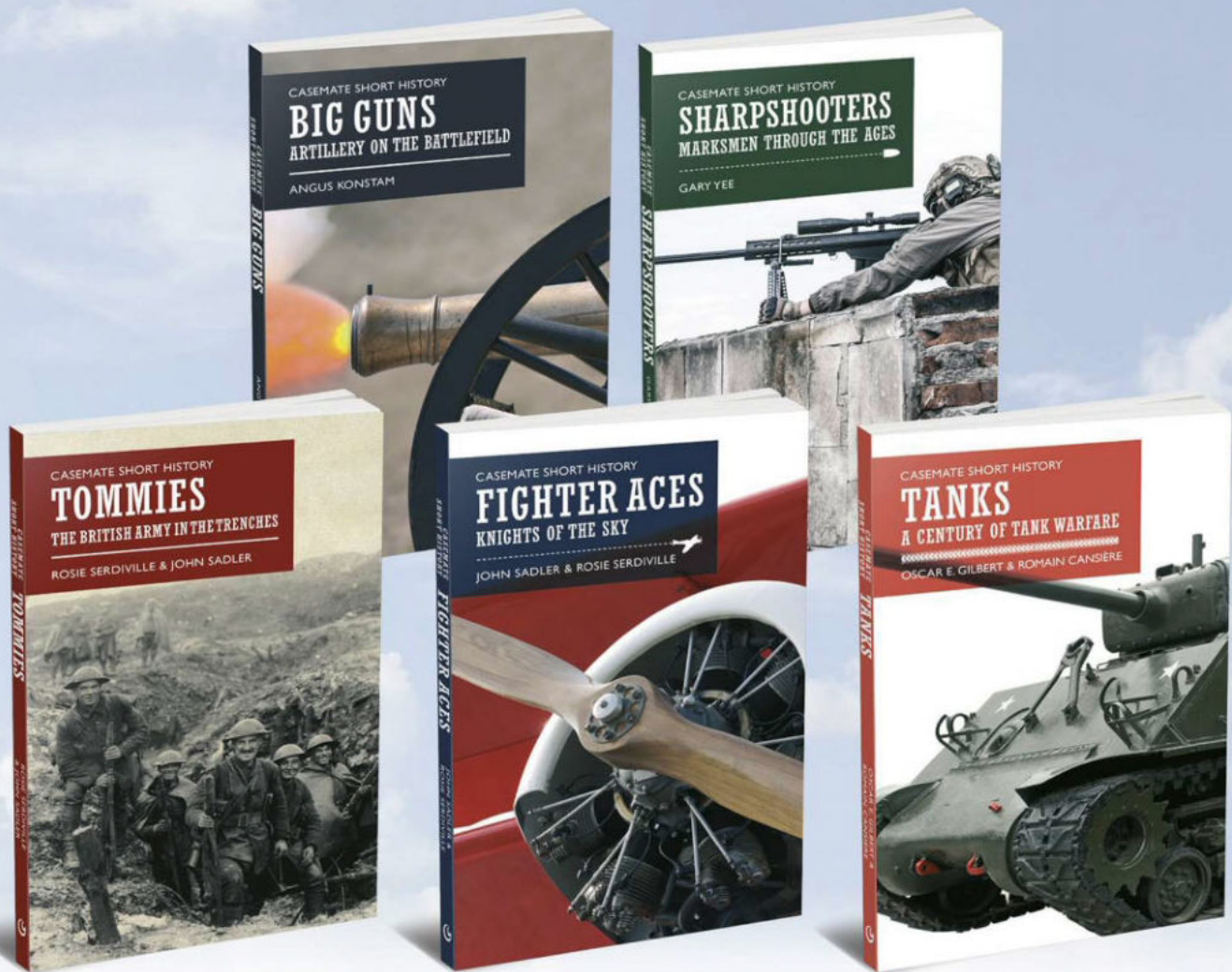
► A BBC World Service **documentary on Anders' army**, presented by Monica Whitlock, will be broadcast on 15 July



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England's migrant crisis

In the 17th century, a combination of war, famine and religious hatred drove almost one in 10 English men and women across the Atlantic to the Americas. But, asks **James Evans**, were the emigrants' dreams of a better life in the New World realised? >



GETTY IMAGES

English Puritans leave the Netherlands – where they had moved to practise their religion freely – before sailing to Massachusetts aboard the *Mayflower* in 1620. Around 400,000 of their compatriots had emigrated to the Americas by the time the century was out

17th-century emigration

“**A**ll hands aloft!” came the “dismal alarm” from the deck, recalled Henry Norwood. Then, in the deep darkness before dawn, he heard the yell: “Breaches, breaches on both sides!”

When the sun had risen (behind a dark, angry bank of cloud) it became obvious how grim his situation was. An “enraged” sea reared. The bows were holed. The ship was trapped in a narrow channel, unable to avoid further collisions with the shore.

As the wind screamed, “all hopes of safety were laid aside”. That the ship escaped to the deeper sea was, wrote Norwood, a “miraculous mercy of God”, those on board hugging in disbelief.

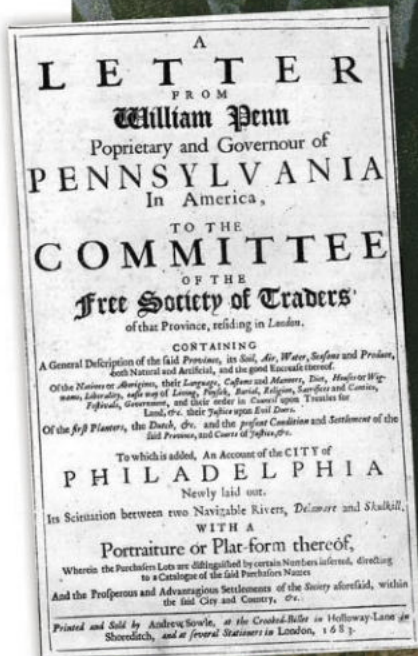
But still the storm blew – and with such ferocity that the mast splintered and broke. Huge waves crashed over the forward deck, sweeping the forecastle away and taking those within it into the sea. Sailors desperately pumped water from the hold, but still the ship foundered, “her head underwater”. The wail of men, women and children bidding each other goodbye was audible even above the elements.

To Norwood’s astonishment, as the storm eased, the ship remained afloat, while a primitive sail was attached to the mast stump. But loss of provisions, and unfavourable winds, saw thirst and hunger become acute. “My dreams,” Norwood recalled, “were all of cellars, and taps running down my throat.” Rats sold for vastly inflated prices. But then finally, one calm evening, on Virginia’s eastern coast, they saw land, resolving to “try our fortunes amongst the Indians”.

Lucky to encounter a friendly tribe, Norwood and his fellow-survivors were led along forest tracks, into the region where the English lived. Many would remain there for the rest of their lives.

Swelling numbers

Henry Norwood and his companions were far from the only English men and women to make the perilous journey across the Atlantic in the second half of 1649. In fact, the final months of the 1640s saw the English colony in Virginia swelling rapidly, topped up, for the most part, by defeated royalists fleeing their homeland in the wake of Charles I’s execution and their impending defeat to the forces of Oliver Cromwell in the Civil War. (Norwood was himself a royalist captain, who had been wounded in the siege of Bristol in 1643.)



The Quakers were among those to flock to the Americas, among them William Penn, shown here negotiating with Native Americans in a 1778 engraving after a Benjamin West painting
INSET ABOVE: A letter from Penn to the Free Society of Traders of Pennsylvania describes the ecology and native peoples of the province in 1683

“Surely,” wrote one royalist, “God Almighty is angry with England.”

As it became clear that the forces of parliament were heading for victory, those who had rallied to King Charles’s cause faced a difficult choice: to pay fines for their prior allegiance or to emigrate. Fearing a “general massacre of the royal party”, or simply refusing to breathe “the air of my own native soil, lest I should be tainted”, many chose the latter option.

In doing so, they were heading into the unknown. To the English, North America was as huge as it was mysterious. No one knew how far it extended inland from its eastern coast. Its inhabitants, some more aggressive than others, were dying in large numbers. The English interpreted this as a sign that God was making room for them. In reality, it was the work of deadly pathogens to which Native Americans had no resistance.

These pathogens had been introduced by the first waves of English colonists who had

arrived at the turn of the 17th century. Best-known of these were the Puritans, some of whom sailed on the now famous *Mayflower*, which set off from Plymouth in 1620. Thousands followed, disgusted by “the vain ostentation” of the age under Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud, who they regarded as a fierce opponent of the Puritan faith. “We do not forsake [our country],” declared one leader, “but are by it forsaken.” Puritans believed that they had been effectively expelled, by “most extreme laws”.

The clergy’s lack of education particularly disgusted them. “One of his horses,” a Puritan complained, “could preach as well as the curate.” Another claimed he might as well sit in an alehouse as at church, so ill-qualified was the minister. Further reformation, radicals concluded, was inconceivable. Departure was the only solution. Alone, or in groups that have been called ‘holy huddles’, they pored over their Bibles, reading and rereading God’s words to





Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee." The fact that warfare, unrest and disease seemed to be worsening in Europe foreshadowed apocalypse. "There is some judgment," wrote the man who hired the *Mayflower*, "not far off."

Moving en masse

The numbers who followed in the *Mayflower's* wake are astonishing. Around 400,000 English men and women crossed the Atlantic during the 17th century – half of them heading to North America – from a population of only about 5 million. It was the equivalent of the entire populations of Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool emigrating today, twice as many as the number of Spaniards who emigrated to South America, and 40 times those who made the journey to North America from France – an Atlantic power with a far larger population.

As the political situation in England changed, so too did the people seeking to carve out new lives in the New World. The outbreak of the Civil War in the 1640s largely ended the departure of Puritans, most feeling that they should remain, to assist in this divine punishment upon English wickedness. They were soon replaced by further waves of migrants: first, Henry Norwood and his fellow royalists, and then

Most left because life in England was impossibly bleak, offering only starvation, disease and oppression

– following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 – the Quakers. Appalled by what they viewed as the intolerance of Charles II's new regime, the Quakers championed 'liberty of conscience' in defiance of overbearing state power. Many of them concluded that this could only be attained in a brave new world across the Atlantic.

Not everyone who emigrated to the Americas was driven there by their faith or conscience. Some went to fish in waters remarkably rich by comparison with those off coastal Europe. Others because they hoped to find precious metals in American soil, or a navigable route to the orient.

But most people left simply because life in England was impossibly bleak, offering only starvation, disease and oppression. In fact, by far the largest number of emigrants went as indentured servants, promising to work as slaves for a limited period (usually between four and seven years), in return for basic food, clothing, shelter and their transportation. Fewer than 10 per cent lived to see the experience out.

These people often hailed from dank, impoverished places in east London, with evocative names like 'Dark Entry', 'Cat's Hole' or 'Shovel Alley'. They were lured aboard migrant ships at fairs, public gatherings or taverns by smooth-talking agents known as 'spirits', who – as William Bullock recalled in *Virginia Impartially Examined* (1649) – brandished promises that, once in America, food would "drop into their mouths", while "any laborious honest man" would become rich. "Being thus deluded," those down on their luck "take courage, and are transported", hoping "to patch up their decay'd fortunes".

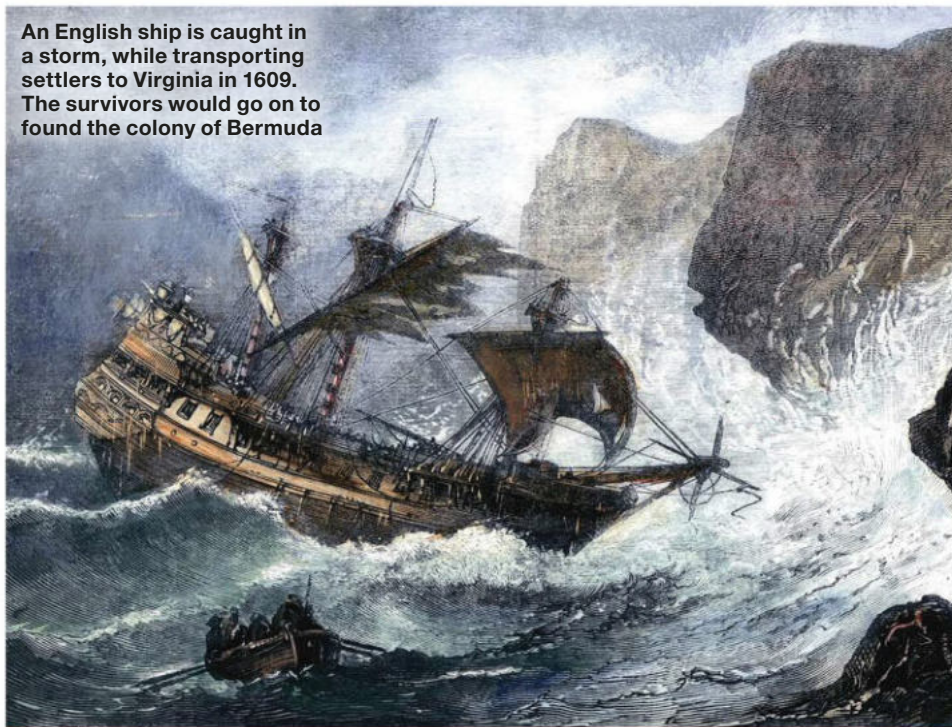
A desperate search

The reason that so many people found the spirits' sales pitches so persuasive was that they had fallen foul of a series of deep structural changes transforming the English economy. Increased enclosure of woods, fields and waste ground, and a rising population, robbed thousands of their homes and possessions. Prices rose. Wages plummeted. Travelling to America, while a major step, was only an extension of the mass movement of desperate people seeking work and shelter within England.

But it was a journey that was fraught with peril. While nowhere in England is far from the coast, many migrants had never set eyes on the sea, and few had been in a boat. Hardly anyone could swim. Many Atlantic crossings fell foul of shipwrecks, piracy and enemy vessels. And then, of course, there was the weather, which made it impossible to predict how long a voyage might last. If the

17th-century emigration

An English ship is caught in a storm, while transporting settlers to Virginia in 1609. The survivors would go on to found the colony of Bermuda



The migrant's travel guide

What English colonists could expect as they set out for the New World

How much would you have had to pay for your passage?

Five or six pounds in 17th-century money, roughly equivalent to £750 today. Most emigrants had little money and so agents known as 'spirits' persuaded them to work as indentured servants to pay off the cost of the voyage.

What would you take with you?

Indentured servants had few possessions. Prior to sailing, they were given 'sweeteners' (beer, tobacco, actual sweets) and basic clothing. Servants were advised to retain their portion of the 'indenture' – the legal document, torn in two – to prove their contract. Wealthier passengers might take wooden chests containing blankets and clothes. A tiny minority had cabins; most were pressed onto the deck.

Which part of the Americas would you have gone to?

This depended upon the 'spirit' (see page 43). Few migrants had a particular destination in mind – all most of them were concerned with was escaping England. One country boy, for example, was removed (on the complaint of his cousin) from a ship bound for Barbados, only to then board another bound for Virginia (this time accompanied by his cousin).

When would you have gone?

The safest time to set sail from England was early spring. Hurricanes – like that experienced by Henry Norwood – became more common in the North Atlantic during

the summer and autumn when the region was prone to a great "violency of storms".

What route did the ships take?

Ships crossing the Atlantic from England sailed either a direct, northerly route towards Newfoundland, or a southerly one, which involved heading down the coast of Europe, visiting the Canary Islands, crossing the Atlantic towards the Caribbean, then turning northwards. The latter route was longer but benefited from favourable prevailing winds.

How long would the voyage have lasted?

As sailing ships are dependent on the wind, it was impossible to say. There weren't reliable weather forecasts. It could take anything between one and four months to reach North America, though six to nine weeks was the norm. Uncertainty made provisioning very difficult.

What could you do to ward off disease?

People used folk remedies and wisdom gleaned from experience. William Penn (the founder of Philadelphia) believed the key to preserving health was to keep rosemary and other sweet-smelling herbs, to burn pitch, and to sprinkle vinegar. Passengers should, he wrote, "keep as much upon deck" as possible. He feared "offensive smells". In terms of infection, he was right. Cabins, he recommended – for those who had them – should be cleaned regularly, including under the beds.

migrants were lucky, it would be only five weeks. Henry Norwood reckoned that his journey had taken almost four months.

Sickness – and not just seasickness – was a real danger. Contagion was near-impossible to contain in the confines of a ship, and those that succumbed were often thrown overboard.

Life didn't get any easier for migrants once they'd reached the American seaboard. Some of the earliest residents of Jamestown in Virginia experienced famine so severe that the period became known as the 'starving time', aggravated by Native American attacks that prevented foraging in the woods. Subsequent arrivals found a place "full of misery", the fort's gates hanging at an angle, houses half-pulled down for firewood, wretched, bedraggled survivors. In hotter colonies such as Virginia, a period of acclimatisation – of 'seasoning' – left migrants ill and incapacitated for much of the first year.

Early settlers in New England reported finding the colony there "in a sad and unexpected condition", many inhabitants having died, many more weak and sick, food "hardly sufficient to feed them a fortnight". One warned emigrants not to expect taverns, butchers' shops, grocers' or apothecaries' to provide "what things you need".

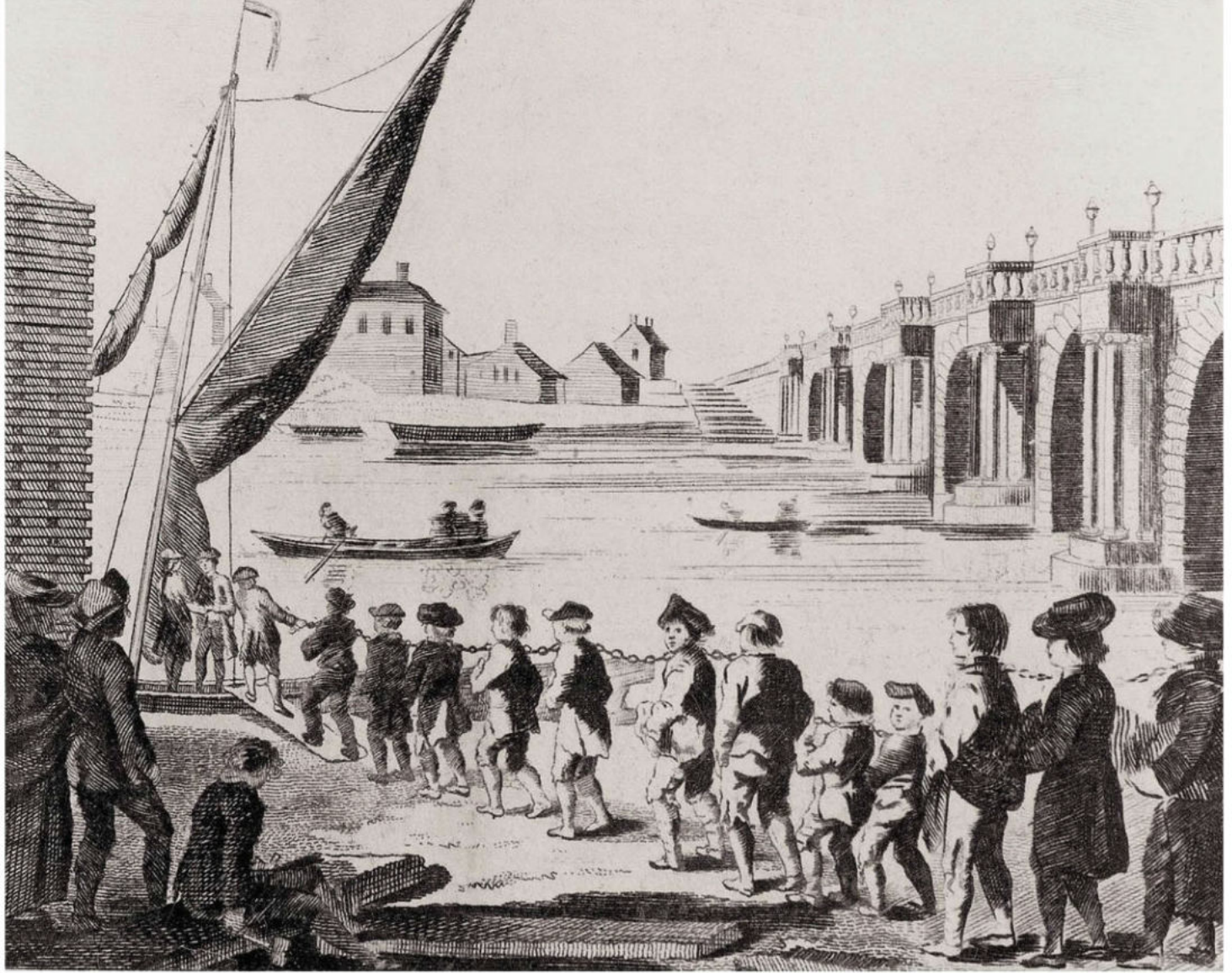
Many died in their first year, wrote one witness, because of "the want of warm lodging". The "first brunts" of an empty, unwelcoming land still needed to be borne. Those who came had better feel sure they were divinely chosen. Others were "not yet fitted for this business".

Over the century, the emigrant experience grew easier, as the numbers of new arrivals – and the stability of their settlements and their resistance to assault – increased. But that's not to say that life in the colonies was easy. In fact, it only appealed to many because what they'd left behind in the Old World was so unrelentingly tough.

The English stay put

By the end of the 17th century, the English language and culture had become firmly established in North America – with enormous consequences for the modern world. But then the number of English migrants began to fall sharply. The question is, why?

One explanation is provided by the beginning of the 'agricultural revolution', which resulted in the increased use of crop rotation, and a reduction in land left 'fallow' and unproductive, enabling food crops to sustain a larger population. Meanwhile, improved transportation, by road and by water, reduced localised shortfalls. The



Prisoners are herded to ships at Woolwich in London for transportation, c1750. By now, the demand for cheap labour in the colonies was increasingly being met by convicts and the slave trade

incidence of famine declined significantly and the pressure on an impoverished segment of the population to emigrate declined.

Then, as England became more tolerant in the wake of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, religious minorities such as the Quakers felt increasingly comfortable practising their beliefs in their homeland.

During the same period, there was a significant cultural shift. The belief that too large a population was detrimental to national wellbeing ceded to a mercantilist view of a reservoir of poor, unemployed labour being good for the country as a whole, if not for the individuals concerned.

"No country can be truly accounted great and powerful by the extent of its territory," or the "fertility of its climate", wrote a typical late-century work, but only "by the multitude of its inhabitants." Emigration, once promoted, was now actively discouraged.

Demand for cheap labour in the colonies was increasingly being met by other now-infamous sources. Convict transportation – the practice of "emptying their jails into our settlements", which Benjamin Franklin would condemn as "the cruellest,

Benjamin Franklin railed against the British practice of "emptying their jails into our settlements"

[insult] that ever one people offered to another" – grew during the second half of the century, undercutting the cost of indentured labour.

Another, yet crueller labour source was provided by the burgeoning slave trade. During the final third of the century, black men and women began to be sold not only as slaves for life but with their status inheritable: something that was justified by growing racial prejudice. As the system became ingrained in the culture of

southern North America, the practice of indentured servitude, and the demand for labour from England, declined.

All of these factors saw the outflow of English emigrants slump – just as it accelerated from other nations. But the huge numbers soon heading to North America from Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Italy and Africa, were moving to a part of the world fundamentally English in its language and its culture. What the German statesman Otto von Bismarck would call the "most important fact" in the modern world – that North Americans speak English – had been established. ■

James Evans is a historian and television producer. His latest book, *Emigrants: Why the English Sailed to the New World*, is published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in July

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

► **Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600** by Eric Richards (Hambleton and London, 2004)

OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

Mud, blood and gas

In part 38 of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** reaches July 1917, when British and German aircraft locked horns over Belgium and torrential rain hampered efforts below. He is tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War – via interviews, letters and diary entries – as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON



James McCudden

James joined the Royal Engineers as a boy bugler in 1910. In 1913, he transferred into the Royal Flying Corps as a mechanic. He qualified as a pilot in 1916, and shot down his first aircraft in September. He became a 2nd lieutenant at the end of that year.

In July 1917, James McCudden returned to active service in France, flying the Sopwith Pup Scout with 66 Squadron. The Pup was a beautiful aircraft to fly, but lacked power and had only one Vickers machine gun – in contrast to the two machine guns carried by the German Albatros. McCudden flung himself into action, but on 26 July he had a narrow escape over the Ypres Salient while patrolling with squadron commander Major Henderson.

“We crossed the lines at 14,000ft over Bixschoote, and very soon saw a lot of Huns.

We continued to climb, as it was our intention to fight at 16,000 or 17,000ft in order to use the Pup's manoeuvrability and light loading to the best advantage.

I saw [an Albatros] bearing down on us, nose-on. He came straight for me and commenced his turn to get behind me. I had plenty of time to increase my speed, and did two quick half-turns, such as a Pup can do. The old Hun came lumbering round and, although he started above, he was now below, having done one half-turn to my full turn.

I now dived on the Hun, who was painted a dirty dull

As the third battle of Ypres began, troops were hampered by shell holes, bad weather and mustard-gas attacks



green, and opened fire from 100ft above. I got my sights on him beautifully when the damned gun stopped, and I had to pull out. But I saw that I'd hit the Hun badly, and Major Henderson now had a shot at him. The Hun went down in a spiral and then dived down east in a steep dive. I very soon lost sight of him.

They set off for home, evading several more German scouts, since Henderson had also suffered a gun stoppage and they were defenceless. James set about clearing his stoppage – a tricky business.

I shut off my petrol at 15,000ft and, holding the control lever with my knees, got to work with the gun. By the time I'd got down to 5,000ft, I decided that I should have to land to clear the stoppage. I turned on my petrol to restart the engine and nothing happened. So, thinking the plugs had oiled up, I gave it full petrol, and after a while the engine just gave one kick. Then, noticing that my legs felt

warm, I looked over the side, saw flames licking round the cowling, and got the fright of my life. I immediately turned off the petrol and dived for Bailleul aerodrome, which was below me.

By the time I'd got down to 500ft and was looking around to see if the tail was still burning, the flames had subsided and I now realised I was short of the aerodrome, and the engine was of no use. I at once plumped for a cornfield outside the aerodrome. When still 20ft up, I saw some telegraph wires just in front of me, so I pushed the Pup's nose down and just scraped between the corn and the wires. I held the Pup off the ground as long as possible, dropped into the corn at 30mph and immediately turned upside down. I clambered out and thanked my lucky stars.

James McCudden had indeed been fortunate. The aircraft were highly flammable and, with no parachutes, pilots in burning aircraft usually faced a terrible choice between immolation or jumping.



Sir Douglas Haig

Haig had served in the British Army for some 30 years when, in December 1915, he was appointed to command British forces on the western front. In 1916 he had commanded British forces during the battle of the Somme.

On 31 July, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig launched a massive offensive: the third battle of Ypres. The objective was to grind down the strength of the Germans, divert attention from the French army, which was struggling with the after-effects of mutinies, and clear the Belgian coast to aid the fight against German U-Boats. In his diary, Field Marshal Haig pondered on a day of mixed success for his men: their advance had been dogged by unseasonal rain, which had begun to teem down

on the low-lying, poorly drained battlefield.

“Fighting on our right-hand side had been most severe. This is something I’d expected. This was a fine day’s work. The ground is thick with dead Germans killed mostly by our artillery. Heavy rain fell this afternoon, and aeroplane observation was impossible. The going also became very bad, and the ground was much cut-up. This has hampered our further progress and robbed us of much of the advantage due to our great success.



William Collins

Bill Collins was born into a working-class family in Croydon. He worked in a shop and as a gardener before joining the Royal Army Medical Corps as a stretcher bearer in 1913.

Sergeant William Collins was still serving with No 1, Cavalry Field Ambulance when he became aware of a horrific new German weapon of war – mustard gas – which was introduced in July 1917.

“The Yellow Cross gas shell – mustard gas – was particularly nasty. The shell would burst with a ‘plop’, the liquid would come out, and the moment it met the air it became gaseous. Of course, it soaked the ground where the shell had fallen, and if some unfortunate soldier happened to sit in that shell hole, he’d have everything burnt away very quickly. Mustard gas attacked all the vascular parts of the body. The under-arm, between the elbow, by the ear – all where the lymphatic glands are. It was a very nasty gas; a very bad invention, that. **H**

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum

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TV AND RADIO

► The BBC’s **First World War coverage** is continuing. You can find out more details through the regular TV and radio updates on historyextra.com



Edmund Williams

Edmund was born in 1894 in Formby, Merseyside to a fairly well-off family. After studying chemistry, in 1914 he volunteered to join the 19th King’s Liverpool Regiment with his brother. His battalion had moved to the western front in November 1915.

One of those hampered by the awful ground conditions at Ypres was Corporal Edward Williams. He was serving with the water and transport sections of the 19th King’s Liverpool Regiment, who were in reserve near Sanctuary Wood during the opening of the offensive.

“On the night of 31 July, we took rations up to the battalion – they weren’t there! We waited for hours under shell fire and rain, without being able to deliver them. The battalion had been moved at the end of the day to take over the front line of shell holes in front of the destroyed village of Hooge on the Menin Road. In that lunar landscape, they’d got off course because they only had

compass bearings.

So the brigade decided that the rations would go up in daylight. It had been drenching rain and we could hardly move. Luckily, the visibility was poor – it was very misty – otherwise we would’ve been shelled to hell! We passed bogged 18-pounder guns, and corpses: hands sticking out of the mud, faces floating in the shell holes.

“We passed bogged 18-pounder guns, and corpses: hands sticking out of the mud, faces floating in the shell holes”

We came out at the top of the rise, and there was a bit of old trench, in which there were two dead Germans – one lying on his face, the other leaning against a wall. He was a handsome bloke; he reminded me of my father a bit. A shell had dissected him nicely. It had taken off the whole of the front of his chest down to his stomach – neatly cut aside and laid apart as if he was in an anatomy school. I said: “What a fantastic exhibition of anatomy!” It sounds heartless but then you’re in an area of suppressed emotion, so your mind tends to take over.

In front of us was broken ground – shell hole after shell hole after shell hole. It was our battalion, and my brother up there with his Lewis gun. He told me later that he’d looked back and seen the mule train as shapes in the mist!

Nothing could be as wicked as the Ypres Salient. The Somme was bad – the Somme was terrible – but the Ypres had a vicious look all of its own.

A PLACE TO REMEMBER

This year marks a century since the Battle of Passchendaele, and the National Memorial Arboretum is hosting a series of commemorative events and exhibitions as part of its Empire At War season





Landscapes of Life Exhibition

The weight of historical significance is palpable as soon as you walk into the grounds of the National Memorial Arboretum – a site featuring more than 300 memorials nestled amongst 30,000 trees. It is a fittingly thought-provoking and beautiful location to commemorate the events of 31 July to 10 November 1917.

The Arboretum's 1917: Empire At War programme will not only remember the Battle of Passchendaele, but also focus on the social changes that occurred during WWI, including the dramatic impact conscription made in terms of broadening the role of women in society. As part of The Royal British Legion, the Arboretum will also look at how families coped with returning injured soldiers and the loss of loved ones, as well as the nature of the communication between the home front and those serving on the front line.

Events in the summer will begin on 31 July, the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Passchendaele, with an outdoor public service honouring those who served. The free to attend service will conclude with a live streaming of the international service at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium, so you can see the full extent of the commemorations.

Other activities to mark the battle will include a participative art installation, as well as a replica trench for visitors to explore. Extended for the 2017 events, the trench will feature an officer's dugout as well as a display of messages from home for the soldiers. On selected dates during the summer, costumed interpreters will be on hand to explain about the working life and conditions of those who inhabited the trenches of WWI. A series of guided walks around Battle of Passchendaele related memorials will be available every Sunday during the summer and early autumn.

Exploring the themes of life on the front line, the home front and an era of developing social change, the Arboretum will also host the Home Front Proms, an evening of live orchestral music from a military band, along with fireworks and WWI based drama.

In September, the Arboretum will host an academic symposium exploring the social upheaval during WWI. A diverse programme of speakers, workshops, tours and seminars will explore how conflict has shaped the social landscape of Britain.

For younger visitors, the Arboretum will also be offering special WWI backpacks to be used on site. These will contain a variety of resources, including dressing up items, all fitting in with and enriching the experience of the rest of the WWI programme.

Alongside this extensive programme, visitors can also explore the new Remembrance Centre, opened in March of this year by HRH The Duke of Cambridge and complete with an interactive exhibition showcasing the stories of those behind the memorials. Two further temporary galleries facilitate a strong rolling exhibition programme and, between 8 July and 24 September, visitors can see Passchendaele: Mud and Memory by artist Steven Dixon.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



Royal Army Medical Corps Memorial

WIN TWO TICKETS TO THE HOME FRONT PROMS

You and a friend or loved one could be part of this momentous summer's evening of performances. Not only could you win two tickets to the Home Front Proms, but you'll also stay in the nearby Swinfen Hall Hotel. To enter, go to historyextra.com/nma-competition



**For more information about Empire At War
and to book Home Front Proms tickets,
visit thenma.org.uk/WW1**

DUNKIRK

Charles Cundall's painting *The Withdrawal from Dunkirk*, June 1940 shows troops crowding the beaches to the east of the port, awaiting passage across the Channel. In the background, Dunkirk burns as the German army closes in



DUNKIRK

With a new film due for release about the rescue of 338,000 Allied troops from the clutches of the Germans, **Tim Benbow** tells the story of the iconic military operation. Then, from page 55, he considers six of the biggest questions on 'the miracle of Dunkirk'





British troops in the rearguard attempt to slow the German advance as their compatriots fight their way to Dunkirk

Some of the 338,226 troops rescued over nine days. "The relief is stupendous and the results beyond belief," wrote Vice-Admiral Ramsay in the wake of the operation



"God help the BEF... I cannot see that we have much hope of getting any of the BEF out." So wrote General Edmund Ironside, chief of the Imperial General Staff, in his diary of 21 and 23 May 1940. Ironside's words reflected a wave of pessimism washing over the British government as it contemplated the dire situation of the British Expeditionary Force in France. If an evacuation should prove necessary, the consensus was that it would last just two days, with as few as 45,000 men being rescued, before the bridgehead was overrun by the Germans.

This bleak assessment was far removed from the optimism with which the BEF had been deployed to France nine months earlier. The British and French were confident they could repel the long anticipated German offensive in the west. And when it began on 10 May, it took just the form that the Allies had expected, with an attack on the Netherlands and Belgium.

The BEF and the French armies in the north carried out their plan to move forward to meet the Germans – but they were advancing into a trap. The Germans' northern thrust was intended to fix the Allies in place, making them vulnerable to the main advance to the south, through the Ardennes. The French had seen this extensively forested area as impassable for tanks and so had only lightly defended it. It was a terrible mistake. Supported by air power, the panzers crossed the river Meuse near Sedan on 14 May, broke through the defences and dashed for the Channel coast, intending to encircle the Allied armies fighting there.

Precisely as the Germans intended, the rapid advance of their tanks spread confusion and panic, shattering the will of the French high command as much as it overran their forces.

The British government urged Lord Gort,

commander of the BEF, to extricate himself from the closing trap by joining the French in an attempt to advance to the south. Yet the various bold schemes for counterattacks to stem the German tide lagged way behind the rapid pace of events on the ground and were quite beyond the capacity of the Allied forces.

Gort was better aware than London, and even Paris, of the true state of affairs: to his north, the Dutch had surrendered and the Belgians were on the verge of following suit; to the south the German tanks were rapidly cutting off the hard-pressed British and French forces from supply and reinforcement.

Gort therefore took the vital decision to fall back on the Channel ports. This was no easy task, involving a fighting retreat through a rapidly closing corridor, under constant air attack. RAF fighters were at the edge of their range and beyond the radar coverage that would be so vital later in the summer. But, although outnumbered, they were able, for the first time in the campaign, to prevent the Luftwaffe from having things all its own way.

On 19 May, command of any large-scale evacuation that might be required was given to Vice-Admiral Bertram Ramsay, whose headquarters was in tunnels beneath Dover Castle – the operation took its name from the dynamo room from which it would be directed. Ramsay began to make preparations, gathering warships from other commands around the country. He also registered privately owned vessels that might be pressed into service – these would become the celebrated 'little ships'.

Stalling tactics

As the Germans continued to advance, it became clear that the only useable port for the BEF would be Dunkirk. It was far from ideal, with tides and sandbanks making navigation challenging. Inland from the port, however, the terrain was favourable to defence, with

marshes and canals forming natural defensive lines. The British and French forces were given further respite by the German army's decision to order a pause in the advance of its tanks – a hugely valuable delay that gifted the Allies two days to build a perimeter.

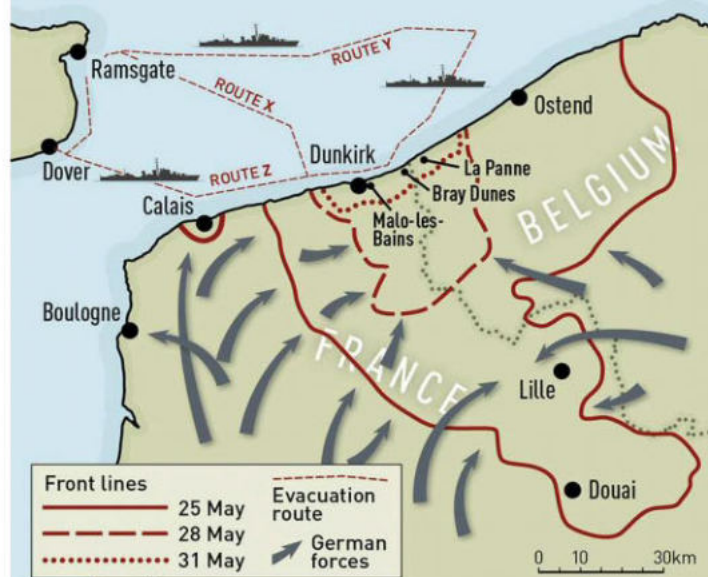
The German advance was further delayed by British troops holding the port of Boulogne as long as they could, finally being evacuated by the navy in an operation that saw destroyers exchanging fire with German tanks – an action in which three of the destroyers' captains were killed. The navy also prepared to evacuate the British forces holding Calais but Churchill ordered this garrison to resist to the end, both to firm up allied solidarity and also to delay the enemy advance a little longer.

Action stations

At 6.57pm on Sunday 26 May, Ramsay received the order: "Begin Operation Dynamo." The evacuation was entirely improvised and could have ended at any time with the fall of Dunkirk, but – with ships and naval parties, to provide control, already on their way to France – the plan he had started to formulate went into action.

The following day, Captain Bill Tennant, appointed by Ramsay as senior naval officer for Dunkirk, arrived at his new command to discover that the main port was quite unusable due to heavy bombing. He therefore looked to the many miles of sandy beaches stretching from the east of the town up to and across the Belgian border. Divided into three sectors (Malo-les-Bains, Bray Dunes and La Panne), these offered plenty of space for the retreating troops to gather. But their gentle slope and the shallow water offshore prevented large vessels from coming in close to load men aboard.

Initially, the warships used their own small boats to lift troops off the beaches, but many of these were wrecked by men inexperienced in their use. This was where the justifiably famous 'little ships' became so important



As their bridgehead contracted in the face of advancing German armies, Allied troops were evacuated from Dunkirk's outer harbour and the beaches snaking east towards the Belgian border

– not so much in carrying men all the way home, but in picking them up from the beaches and carrying them out to the larger ships waiting in deeper water offshore.

As Operation Dynamo picked up momentum, huge numbers of soldiers gathered on the beaches or among the sand dunes lying behind them, forming lines when boats became available, then wading out to board them.

“As far as the eye could see it stretched away into the distance, the firm sand of the shore merging farther back into dunes where the surface was no more than a thin yellow powder interspersed with parched tussocks of coarse grass,” wrote Second Lieutenant Peter Hadley of the Royal Sussex Regiment. “And covering all this vast expanse, like some mighty ant heap upturned by a giant’s foot, were the remains of the British Expeditionary Force.”

Tortuously slow

The beaches were absolutely critical to the evacuation, with one in three of all soldiers rescued in the operation being picked up from the strips of sand snaking their way along the coast to the east of Dunkirk. But embarkation was painfully slow and, to make matters worse, the pocket around the BEF was steadily contracting before the German advance.

Bill Tennant was well aware that taking off large numbers of men demanded use of proper harbour facilities, but the German bombing had knocked these out. He therefore turned his attention to the outer harbour, where there were two breakwaters: the West Mole, from the oil terminal, and the East Mole, from the town. The latter was about a mile long, made from concrete piles with a wooden walkway on top. It had not been designed for mooring large ships but Tennant tested it out, ordering a liner to come alongside.

This brilliant improvisation worked: the East Mole was fragile and vulnerable to air attack, as were all ships moored next to it,

“Back at home... they treated us as heroes. You’d have thought we’d won a battle instead of lost one”

but it allowed large numbers of men to be embarked directly on to ships that could carry them home. Around 70 per cent of those evacuated at Dunkirk embarked from the harbour, most from the East Mole.

During the operation, the Territorial Army chaplain Reverend Ted Brabyn observed: “Never was a prayer more heartfelt than the one: ‘Thank God we’ve got a navy.’”

Brabyn’s gratitude was directed not just at the vessels carrying the troops back to England but also at the naval parties charged with organising the evacuation itself. At the East Mole, that task was overseen by the Canadian commander Jack Clouston. As piermaster, he helped bring forward the waiting troops, hurrying them along the mole to board waiting vessels. It was a critical job but one that would cost Clouston his life. On Sunday 2 June, he returned to Dover to help organise the planned last lift and then headed back to Dunkirk. En route, the motor torpedo boat carrying him was sunk and, exhausted after several days of continuous work, Clouston was unable to make it to the ships picking up survivors. He slipped away and drowned.

Safety in numbers

As the organisation of Operation Dynamo improved and more vessels arrived, the numbers carried off steadily climbed. While

just 7,600 troops were evacuated on 27 May, two days later, 47,300 were saved. And still the number kept climbing: 53,800 on 30 May and 68,000 on 31 May, before dipping slightly to 64,400 on 1 June.

By Sunday 2 June, Tennant was able to send the signal: “BEF evacuated.” Yet the desire not to abandon the French soldiers who had held the perimeter so staunchly led to the exhausted crews being asked to go in again and again, for three more nights, rescuing another 79,000 troops.

Operation Dynamo ended on Tuesday 4 June. The following day, Vice-Admiral Ramsay wrote to his wife: “All is done now and the task is behind. The relief is stupendous and the results beyond belief.” He was right. An operation that was expected to be over in two days had lasted nine. During that time, 338,226 troops had been saved from the clutches of the Wehrmacht.

While ships from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland participated, over 90 per cent of those rescued were carried in British ships, the great majority in naval vessels, or civilian boats crewed by the navy.

As Ted Brabyn acknowledged, the Royal Navy was critical to the miracle of Dunkirk but its assistance came at a price, including the loss of six invaluable destroyers. The navy was hurt but the army had been saved – a fact not lost on Britons following the drama unfolding on the Normandy coast.

“Back at home I think they realised that we’d been beaten, and we’d had a real hammering,” observed Signaller Alfred Baldwin, Royal Artillery, “but nevertheless, they treated us as heroes. You’d have thought we’d won a battle instead of lost one.”

The campaign to save France had indeed been a disaster for the Allies, with the Low Countries and France herself knocked out of the war. Yet the brilliance of Dynamo meant that Germany was denied a complete victory, and Britain would fight on.

Dunkirk: the big questions

Soldiers climb a ladder to safety at Dunkirk. Troops were ferried from the shore on cockle boats, yachts, rubbish barges and fire tenders as well as Royal Navy warships



DUNKIRK: SIX BIG QUESTIONS ON A REMARKABLE RESCUE MISSION

1 Did Hitler let the British get away?

The German order of 23 May to halt the advancing panzers has led to a claim that Hitler deliberately allowed the British to escape – the idea being that avoiding humiliation would make them more willing to accept a peace deal that would free him to turn his attention to the east. This is utter nonsense.

First, it does not make sense. Capturing most of the trained strength of the British Army would have provided a weighty bargaining chip. Second, the claim does not reflect what happened: only one of the two advancing German armies halted (and only for two days, pushing on when it became clear that an evacuation might be under way). The other pressed on and the Luftwaffe continued to attack. If this was an attempt to allow the BEF to escape, it was distinctly half-hearted.

Third, there is a perfectly adequate explanation for the halt order. The German armoured forces were stretched after a long advance and needed a pause to recover, to allow infantry and supplies to catch up, and to prepare for

the next stage of the campaign, pushing for Paris and fighting the large French forces to the south. Some German commanders were nervous that their progress had been too good to last, influenced by a minor British counter-attack near Arras on 21 May, which raised groundless fears that a larger Allied counter-stroke might be imminent. What's more, Hermann Göring, the commander of the Luftwaffe, insisted that his force could mop up the remnants of the encircled Allied forces.

Given the understandable assumption that their enemies were cornered with nowhere to go, why take a risk pushing on? Even the British did not believe that a large-scale evacuation was feasible, so why would the Germans?

The decision to halt was a grave error that greatly assisted the British, gifting them time to continue their withdrawal and to strengthen the defences around Dunkirk. This does not mean that it can only be explained by a conspiracy theory.

A German military column pictured in the Ardennes on 12 May 1940 during the invasion of France. Hitler's order that the panzers halt outside Dunkirk 11 days later has spawned numerous conspiracy theories



2 Did the RAF let the army down?

Some of the troops who fought in France bitterly criticised the RAF, not least for what they saw as its lack of effort over Dunkirk. Jibes referring to the 'Royal Absent Force' stung – and were quite unjustified.

Many of the RAF's aircraft were obsolescent and, even alongside its French counterpart, it was badly outnumbered by the Luftwaffe. Squadrons from Fighter Command, Bomber Command, Coastal Command and the Fleet Air Arm did what they could to resist the onslaught, suffering terrible casualties that saw entire squadrons wiped out. But their activities were often out of soldiers' sight.

The troops' wish to see friendly aircraft overhead was understandable but misconceived. Supporting aircraft might be better employed striking enemy land forces elsewhere, or intercepting their aircraft some distance from the bridgehead. There was also a need to find a balance between committing squadrons to the Battle of France and keeping enough back to defend Britain.

One legitimate criticism is the charge that the RAF placed far too much emphasis on strategic bombing. At this stage, this was far short of achieving what its proponents claimed, and meant that other areas (particularly aircraft co-operating with the army and navy) were short of resources.

However, despatches written by Lord Gort and Bertram Ramsay – high-ranking officers in the army and navy respectively, who were in a better position to appreciate the full picture than the infantry being bombed at Dunkirk – are striking. Both paid tribute to the sacrifice of the RAF, without which the evacuation would have been impossible.

3



While overseeing the Dunkirk evacuation, Vice Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay combined a mastery of detail with the ability to delegate



Lord Gort, the clear-sighted commander of the BEF, salutes a sentry outside the War Office, 1940

Three aircraft of No 218 RAF Squadron in flight over northern France. The RAF was badly outnumbered by the Luftwaffe during the Battle of France



GETTY IMAGES/IWM C 449

4 How important were the 'little ships'?

Who were the brains behind the operation?

Two men stand out. General Lord Gort, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, deserves enormous credit for his calmness in a confusing and disastrous situation, in which he displayed a remarkable ability to grasp what was happening. He turned down a series of flawed proposals for counterattacks, which his French allies were quite unable to carry out, in favour of pulling back towards the coast. Then, when news came of the imminent collapse of Belgium, he took swift action to redeploy his forces, filling a gap through which the Germans would otherwise have poured.

Bernard Montgomery, a division commander at Dunkirk and future hero of north Africa, was not generally free with praise for others. But, in his memoir, he wrote of Gort: "He was a man who did not see very far, but as far as he did see he saw very clearly... It was *because* he saw very clearly, if only for a limited distance, that we all got away at Dunkirk."

The other key individual was Bertram Ramsay. Despite officially being on the retired list, at the start of the war Ramsay was appointed Vice-Admiral Dover, a critical command given its position on the English Channel. At Dunkirk, Ramsay proved the merits of that appointment, overseeing, with consummate professionalism, what the Dictionary of National Biography calls "the largest seaborne evacuation ever attempted".

Ramsay showed an ability to put together and lead a team in the most trying circumstances, mastering detail yet also able to delegate. Later in the war, he led the planning for the D-Day landing. Having rescued the army from the continent, it was appropriate that he masterminded its return four years later.

The 'little ships' are central to how Dunkirk is remembered and portrayed. They were the more than 700 privately owned vessels that participated in the evacuation, including motor boats, sailing ships and vessels towed across the Channel. They represented the full range of seafaring activities of the nation, including fishing trawlers, cockle boats, yachts, lifeboats, paddle ferries, pleasure cruisers, a fire tender, rubbish barges and vessels owned by the Pickfords removals company. The names tell a story of their own: *Lord Collingwood* and *Lord St Vincent* served alongside *Yorkshire Lass*, *Count Dracula* and *Dumpling*.

Their limited capacity for passengers was outweighed by the priceless advantage of a shallow draft, which allowed them to go close inshore to pick up the waiting soldiers.

The image of civilians answering the call to help save the beleaguered army is

undeniably a compelling one. It was subsequently exaggerated, just like the contribution of 'the Few' in the Battle of Britain. Yet, just like that later example, there was more than a kernel of truth to the story.

The little ships' contribution needs to be put in context. They carried few men all the way home, rather being used to ferry them out to the larger ships. Many were manned by civilian crews, yet there was also a good sprinkling of naval or naval reserve personnel.

But Churchill's 'mosquito armada' did play an important role. Many men would not have got home without them – and they paid a high price, coming under constant attack from the Luftwaffe and having to brave mines, fast tides, fog, and waters cluttered with ever more wrecks. More than 100 were lost, including many that were unidentified. The little ships deserve their place in history.



Three of the 700-strong armada of 'little ships' that rescued soldiers from the shores of France. More than 100 were lost in the operation

5 Was Dunkirk really a miracle?

The events of Dunkirk are often described as miraculous. While the fine weather was a remarkable stroke of luck – especially the calm seas, without which evacuation from the beaches would have been impossible – the explanation is for the most part more mundane. The Germans made a major mistake in pausing their advance, thereby easing the pressure on the bridgehead. While the Royal Air Force was not able to provide air superiority, it did enough to prevent the Luftwaffe from making the operation impossible. Ship losses were high but not sufficient to stop the evacuation.

The BEF and the French army deserve far more credit than they usually get, for the determined and disciplined way that they fought their way out of the closing trap – while short of food and ammunition, against an enemy with air supremacy, and through roads choked with refugees – and then defended the ever shrinking perimeter long enough for the evacuation to take place. Most of all, though, the operation depended on the effective use of sea power.

The Royal Navy had inflicted heavy losses on its German counterpart during the Norway campaign a few months earlier. This prevented the Kriegsmarine from interfering with Operation Dynamo (and also denied Germany any real option for invasion in late 1940). The Royal Navy, with great assistance from the merchant navy, then proved able to improvise a remarkably successful evacuation, despite near constant air attack.

Civilian and naval crews (albeit far more of the latter) went back time and again, in difficult circumstances, to bring the defeated army home to fight another day.



A still from the new blockbuster, *Dunkirk*. If the operation had failed, Churchill might have been toppled, argues Tim Benbow

6 If the evacuation had failed, would Britain have lost the war?

While the outcome of Operation Dynamo was as great a relief to the government as it was a boost to popular morale, what was its real significance? Some historians have argued that its impact has been exaggerated, that Britain would have fought on regardless. This is plausible; the RAF would have been no less ready to fight the Battle of Britain, while the Royal Navy would have been equally well placed to prevent any German attempt at invasion.

But Britain's situation in the summer of 1940 was dire. The defeat and occupation of Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium were followed by the collapse of France, Britain's main ally. Germany was effectively allied with the Soviet Union, Italy now joined their side in the war, and any US entry was a long way off. Worse still, Germany controlled the coastlines of France and Norway, putting it in a far better position to wage war at sea. Britain's survival was in genuine doubt.

But imagine if Britain had seen another 200,000 troops taken prisoner, losing the bulk of its trained army and

the nucleus for its later expansion. This would have represented another heavy blow to its ability – and, crucially, willingness – to face the difficult years to come. At best, the successful campaigns in north Africa and the Mediterranean would have been far more difficult to fight, allowing Germany to invade the Soviet Union earlier, with better prospects for success. Material support from the US would have been slower to come – if it came at all.

We've also got to consider that, while Churchill was resolute about fighting on, his position was far from unassailable. It is conceivable that, if Dunkirk had ended in disaster, his administration could have been toppled and replaced by a government willing to seek the best peace it could negotiate. Dunkirk therefore has to be seen as one of the key turning points of the war. **H**

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DISCOVER MORE

FILM

► **Dunkirk**, a film about Operation Dynamo, will be in cinemas from July

BOOKS

- **Forgotten Voices: Dunkirk** by Joshua Levine (Ebury, 2011)
- **Full Cycle** by WS Chalmers (Hodder & Stoughton, 1959)
- **Pillar of Fire** by Ronald Atkin (Birlinn, 1990)
- **Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man** by Hugh Sebag-Montefiore (Penguin, 2007)

WEBSITE

You can read more about the **Dunkirk evacuation** on the BBC Archive website: bbc.co.uk/archive/dunkirk



Destroyers with an RAF escort return to Britain from northern France



GETTY IMAGES

A fleet of small boats are towed up the Thames after taking part in Operation Dynamo, June 1940



WHAT BROUGHT A THAW IN THE COLD WAR?

As the Second World War's uneasy alliances unravelled, a new world emerged: of east vs west and of global conflicts as the superpowers vied for influence. From dark days to moments of hope, **David Reynolds** traces the Cold War from 1961 to 1991

Accompanies the BBC Radio 4 series *Cold War: Stories from the Big Freeze*



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Snapshots of the Cold War

- 1 Soviet troops start to withdraw from Afghanistan – 'Moscow's Vietnam' – in spring 1988, following the Geneva Accords with the USA
- 2 Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev start talking about bilateral nuclear arms reductions in Geneva, November 1985
- 3 By 1967, opposition to the Vietnam War and the Draft was mounting in America
- 4 West Berliners wave to those on the other side of the then-rudimentary Berlin Wall, 1961
- 5 A statue of Soviet secret police founder Felix Dzerzhinsky, a potent symbol of Stalinism, is removed from Lubyanka Square, Moscow in August 1991
- 6 Henry Kissinger shakes hands with North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho as the Paris Peace Accords of January 1973 effectively end US involvement in the war

In 1961, the Berlin Wall sealed off the last exit from east to west. It also insulated the most dangerous flashpoint in the European Cold War. Gradually both sides of the Iron Curtain settled into the reality of division. No one born in the 1950s and 1960s could imagine anything different.

On the periphery, however, the Cold War was hot and violent. The 1960s saw an escalating conflict in Vietnam, divided after 1945 between the communist north (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam – DRV) and a corrupt southern regime in Saigon (the Republic of Vietnam). The ROV was dominated by the military and became increasingly dependent on the USA after the French abandoned their empire in Indochina in 1954.

In itself, South Vietnam was of no great importance to the Americans. But by 1965 President Lyndon Johnson saw it as an issue of America's global credibility. He also feared that if he didn't act tough abroad against communism, conservatives would block funding for his Great Society programmes at home. "I was determined to be a leader of war and a leader of peace," he remarked later. "I believed America had the resources to do both."

It was astonishing hubris. Neither sustained bombing nor escalating US troop commitments broke Vietnam. Instead, Vietnam broke Johnson. Such was the unpopularity of the war by 1968 that Johnson decided not to run for re-election. And it took his Republican successor, Richard Nixon, all of his first term to extract the USA from its south-east Asian quagmire.

Nixon reaches out

The People's Republic of China (PRC) had become banker and arsenal for the DRV and this forced the USSR – now China's ideological rival for leadership of the communist world – to provide similar aid or lose face. So Nixon had to disengage the two communist superpowers in order to facilitate peace in Vietnam. He and his aide Henry Kissinger were finally able to achieve this with the Paris peace accords of January 1973.

In 1972 Nixon became the first US president to visit the capitals of the two communist superpowers. While in Moscow, he and the Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, signed a dozen major agreements to slow the arms race, develop economic relations and promote cultural exchange. The following year, Brezhnev visited America and in 1974 Nixon returned to Russia. It seemed that detente – relaxation of tension – was becoming a pattern.

In Europe, too, old tensions eased. Under the Social Democrat leadership of Willy Brandt, West Germany reached out across the

Iron Curtain in 1972, extending de facto recognition with the regime in East Berlin and concluding, with the four Allied occupying powers, agreements on easier access across the Berlin Wall. Brandt's goals were pragmatic: to make life easier for the people of that divided city. He had not abandoned hopes of eventual unification and talked of "change through rapprochement", but never seriously imagined a united Germany in his lifetime.

Yet detente soon stalled. America had been riven by the Vietnam War and then the Watergate scandal, which obliged Nixon to resign in 1974. Heavy borrowing for the war fuelled inflation, exacerbating America's trade and payments deficit and finally forcing the country off the gold standard in 1971. The automatic convertibility of dollars into gold had been a cornerstone of the post-1945 monetary system: the end of that era seemed like another intimation of mortality for the Pax Americana.

The west as a whole was also in economic turmoil in the 1970s, as the long postwar boom collapsed in depression. The catalyst was the oil crisis of 1973, when Arab states hiked up the price of oil in retaliation for the United States' support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War. Ensuing inflation was accompanied by industrial stagnation and rising unemployment, creating a phenomenon called 'stagflation' that defied orthodox Keynesian remedies and left western governments acutely vulnerable against aggrieved voters and workers. The USSR by contrast – an economy heavily dependent on oil and gas exports – did very well from rising energy prices.

As the 1970s progressed, it became clear that 'detente' meant different things on either side of the east-west divide. Washington assumed that the Soviets would now behave themselves and not seek to destabilise a world shaped by American hegemony. Moscow believed that the nuclear parity it had now achieved with the USA provided a chance to expand communism with impunity.

Communist upsurge

In 1975, the whole of Indochina – Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – fell to the communists in a few months. In Angola in 1975–76, the USSR used troops from Fidel Castro's communist enclave of Cuba to fight against guerrillas backed by the USA and neighbouring South Africa and mobilised Cuban proxies again in 1977–78 to strengthen its position in Ethiopia and Somalia, failed states on the Horn of Africa. One Cuban soldier gloated: "We have done twice what the Yankees could not do once in Vietnam."

Here was arrogant bluster from the other side. The Soviets would find the 'Third World', with failed states and ethnic conflicts,

as difficult to manage as the Americans. This became clear in Afghanistan, where the Kremlin intervened at Christmas 1979 to prop up its crumbling influence. Although a new government was quickly installed, the USSR was sucked into a chaotic struggle that dragged on until February 1989 and cost the lives of 15,000 Soviet troops. Afghanistan became Moscow's Vietnam.

But at the end of 1979 this was far in the future. The immediate effect of Soviet intervention was to kill detente. America's beleaguered president Jimmy Carter hyped up the Afghan crisis as "the greatest threat to world peace since the Second World War" and struck back by withdrawing the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty he had recently agreed with Brezhnev in Vienna (SALT II) from Senate ratification. None of this saved him from electoral defeat in November 1980.

Carter's successor was Ronald Reagan, a former movie actor and militant anti-communist, who announced in his first presidential press conference that "so far detente's been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims". And so the superpowers slid into what was dubbed the 'New Cold War'.

In December 1981, Poland's communist government, locked in a struggle with the Solidarity movement of independent trade unions, imposed martial law to avoid likely intervention by the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.

Meanwhile, Nato responded to the Soviet build-up of new SS-20 intermediate-range missiles, aimed at western Europe, with its so-called 'dual track' policy of deploying American Cruise and Pershing II missiles while seeking to negotiate arms reduction from a position of renewed strength. The deployments were pushed through in 1983 by rightist governments in Britain and West Germany, led by Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl. In response, the Soviets withdrew from all arms control talks – the first time for 15 years that the superpowers had not been engaged in any negotiations.

In March 1983, Reagan raised the stakes further with two dramatic speeches. First he told an audience of evangelical Christians that the Soviet leaders were "the focus of evil in the modern world" and insisted that no one

should ignore "the aggressive impulses of an evil empire". Two weeks later, he claimed in a TV address that it was now technologically possible to create a strategic defence against nuclear missiles, and called for a massive spending programme to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete".

From Star Wars to arms talks

Reagan, as usual, was expressing simplistic ideas without informed understanding, but he had a gift for appealing to the American public. His Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) – dubbed 'Star Wars' by the many sceptics – was turned into a slick propaganda campaign by hawks in the Pentagon, who wanted to exploit US advantages over the USSR in laser and computer technologies. Yet the president himself seems to have genuinely believed in the idea. He loathed the strategic doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), considering it literally mad. This crusading Cold Warrior was, paradoxically, also an ardent peacenik.

His chance came in March 1985 with an abrupt changing of the guard in the Kremlin. After Brezhnev and two equally geriatric successors had expired within 28 months, the Politburo reluctantly skipped a generation and appointed Mikhail Gorbachev as the new General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Born in 1931, Gorbachev was a bright young reformer, part of a new university-educated generation, whose eyes had been opened by visits to the west in the 1970s. The night he was appointed, while walking around the garden (to avoid KGB bugs), he told his wife: "We can't go on living like this."

By now, oil prices were falling and the Soviet command economy was literally no longer delivering the goods. The west, by contrast, had overcome the 1970s' stagflation and was moving into a new era of service industries and the IT revolution. Gorbachev needed to ease the arms burden on the struggling Soviet economy, so he responded eagerly to Reagan's readiness to talk.

In a series of four summits from 1985 to 1988, the two leaders engaged in many fiery arguments but also discovered a shared abhorrence of the nuclear age. Indeed, in December 1987, they signed away a whole category of weapons – the intermediate-range nuclear forces, including the SS-20s, Cruise and Pershing II missiles that had bedevilled east-west relations for the past decade. US pressure, including the threat of SDI, had doubtless played a part. But the unprecedented entente also reflected a fundamental change in Soviet security policy based on new concepts such as "reasonable defensive sufficiency" and

By 1985, oil prices were falling and the Soviet economy was literally no longer delivering the goods

The war goes global



Brought to the brink

ABOVE: The superpowers square up in the sandpit of the Yom Kippur War, as the USSR and the west supply firepower to Israel and Egypt/Syria respectively



Red tide

RIGHT: Young fighters for the Khmer Rouge, the murderous communist regime that ruled Cambodia from 1975–79



Chip off the old bloc

RIGHT: The Solidarity workers' movement, founded in 1980 and comprising 10 million members just a year later, drove Poland's move away from communism. In 1990, its founder Lech Walesa became the country's first non-communist head of state in 45 years



Prowar pin

ABOVE: An anti-communism American badge from 1970 supporting the war in Vietnam and opposing US trade with the USSR

Sub-Saharan comrades

LEFT: An Angolan boy cleans a Cuban soldier's boots, 1976. Thousands of Cuban soldiers propped up Angola's Marxist government, with Moscow and East Berlin providing further support – a major obstacle for the Soviet–American detente



Backtogether Elated crowds celebrate Germany's reunification, October 1990. Eleven months earlier, with the Iron Curtain rapidly disintegrating, the Berlin Wall – the concrete manifestation of the decades-long division between east and west – had dramatically come down

“common human values”. As Gorbachev remarked: “Whatever divides us, we have the same planet to live on.”

Advisers gradually persuaded him that the modernisation of Soviet society would require not just economic reforms but also a more open political system. In fact, Gorbachev wanted reform across the whole Soviet bloc, declaring in 1987 that “unity does not mean uniformity” and that there was “no model of socialism to be imitated by all”. Eastern Europeans had not forgotten 1956 and 1968, when Gorbachev’s predecessors had sent in the tanks to crush reform in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. But now they saw, if not exactly a green light from Moscow, at least one that had changed from red to amber.

Walls come tumbling down

In the summer of 1989, the long Polish logjam finally broke when round-table talks and more open elections resulted in victory for a Solidarity-led coalition. By contrast, Hungary’s revolution started from the top not the bottom, through splits over reform within the ruling party, but the country also soon moved towards multi-party elections. Beamed around the bloc via radio and television, these dramatic developments galvanised protests in East Germany, whose people – uniquely within the Soviet bloc – had a right of citizenship on the other side of the Iron Curtain if they could reach West Germany.

After Hungary opened its border to Austria in May 1989, the flow became a flood and on 9 November, after shambolic policy

decisions, the Berlin Wall itself was opened – fracturing the most notorious symbol of the east-west divide. By Christmas 1989, the communist bloc was a thing of Europe’s past. Apart from Romania, the revolution had been remarkably peaceful.

In 1990, the biggest challenge was to resolve the German question. The struggle for mastery of Germany lay at the root of the initial Cold War rift between the wartime allies. The Berlin Wall had temporarily stabilised the issue in 1961, but now, after its fall, the East German state was no longer viable. With Chancellor Helmut Kohl forcing the pace on German unification, another international face-off seemed possible. This was the fear of Margaret Thatcher, whose visceral suspicions of German power dated back to the Second World War.

But President George HW Bush had none of Thatcher’s hang-ups. Kohl also worked closely with François Mitterrand in Paris, who was reassured by the chancellor’s readiness to anchor the united Germany in an ever closer European Union – including a shared currency, the euro. Chequebook diplomacy

from Kohl bought Gorbachev’s assent and also the rapid withdrawal of Soviet troops from German soil. On 3 October 1990 the two Germanies became one.

The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the unification of Germany effectively drew a line under Europe’s Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union itself in 1991 was, for American triumphalists, simply the icing on the cake.

Yet it is worth reflecting that many of the problems with which we wrestle today have their roots in the rapid and chaotic events of 1989–91: a problematic eurozone riddled with economic contradictions; a European Union that has embraced most of the continent while becoming increasingly flabby; and a humiliated Russia that recovered its nerve under the aggressive leadership of Vladimir Putin. The way the Cold War ended contained many seeds of our present discontents. **H**

Professor David Reynolds is the author of *One World Divisible: A Global History Since 1945* (Penguin, 2001) and co-editor with Kristina Spohr of *Transcending the Cold War* (Oxford, 2016). He is an advisor for the *Cold War* BBC radio series

Many of the problems with which we wrestle today have their roots in the rapid and chaotic events of 1989–91

DISCOVER MORE

RADIO

► **Cold War: Stories from the Big Freeze** is due to begin on BBC Radio 4 on 3 July



BOOK

► **The Cold War: A New Oral History of Life Between East and West** by Bridget Kendall (Penguin, July 2017)



Clare Mulley photographed in London. "Both women were proud German patriots with a strong sense of duty. However, they were committed to very different things: Hanna to the new Nazi regime, Melitta to a much older idea of Germany," she says

Photography by Fran Monks



INTERVIEW / CLARE MULLEY

"This story highlights the ludicrous contradictions of Hitler's regime"

Clare Mulley talks to **Ellie Cawthorne** about her new book charting the extraordinary parallel lives of two female test pilots who flew for Nazi Germany

PROFILE CLARE MULLEY

Clare Mulley is a historical author and biographer. Her books include *The Spy Who Loved: The Secrets and Lives of Christine Granville* (Pan Macmillan, 2013) and *The Woman Who Saved the Children: A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb* (Oneworld, 2009)

IN CONTEXT

In the Nazi regime's male-dominated air industry, two women defied expectation and rose to prominence as test pilots. Hanna Reitsch (1912–79) and Melitta Schiller's (1903–45) highly valued and dangerous work saw them connected to the Third Reich's leading figures, and both were awarded a Nazi Germany military honour, the Iron Cross. Yet, as Clare Mulley's new book reveals, the two women held opposing attitudes towards Nazism, which led them to dramatically different actions during the Second World War.

What was the symbolic significance of flight in Nazi Germany?

The German air force was abolished following the First World War, as part of the Treaty of Versailles. Planes were destroyed and mechanised flight was banned. In response, gliding became the nation's new aspirational sport. It gained a mass following; crowds of 30,000 people would come along to watch shows. Gliding was a symbol of patriotic regeneration and freedom – Germany's phoenix rising from the ashes.

In 1920, Hitler flew for the first time. Crammed in between the gas canisters of an open biplane, he didn't enjoy the experience. It was terrible weather and he got airsick. However, he instantly recognised the huge potential of flight. With its connotations of freedom and power, flying wasn't just about sport or commerce for Hitler: it was a political machine. In 1932, he became the first leader to undertake an airborne election campaign and did so with huge theatrical panache. He would fly off at dusk, lights blazing in the sky. The Nazi party went on to use flight in all sorts of ways: they advertised party membership figures on the side of zeppelins and used planes to distribute propaganda leaflets all over the country.

What have you learnt about these two remarkable female pilots?

Both were naturally brilliant pilots, but had incredibly different careers. Hanna Reitsch was the first woman to fly a helicopter and became one of very few women to fly the jet-rocket-powered Messerschmitt 163. She also tested planes with special wing tips intended to cut the steel cables underneath the zeppelins that formed the barricade around London. She would deliberately fly

into balloon cables at huge personal risk: this was incredibly courageous work. After a terrible crash in which she reportedly "wiped her nose off her face", Hanna also became an early plastic surgery patient.

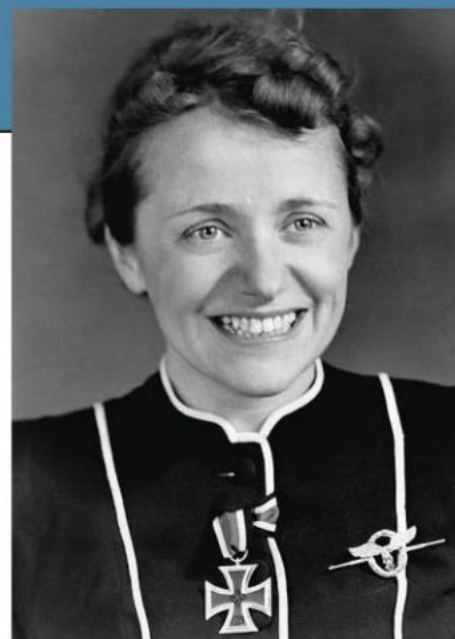
Hanna is probably most famous for being one of the last people to fly into Berlin when the Red Army surrounded the city in the final days of the war. After her plane was shot at and her co-pilot slumped unconscious from blood-loss, she landed near the Führerbunker. Here she begged Hitler to let her fly him to safety, but he refused.

Melitta Schiller (later von Stauffenberg) learnt to fly over the same green Silesian slopes as Hanna. She too adored the sensation and freedom of flight. But she also loved the physics behind it, and these two passions came together in the cockpit. After an engineering degree, Melitta headed up one of the main Nazi aeronautical research centres. She spent half her time at the drawing board developing pioneering changes for the Luftwaffe and the other half testing out her own designs. Her speciality was dive bombing: almost vertical dives at very high speeds. This was hugely dangerous: the blood in your body was pulled to the extremities and pilots were at high risk of blacking out. To undertake one dive bomb was extraordinary. Melitta undertook around 1,500. Other experts couldn't believe that one pilot could be doing all these tests and when they discovered it was a woman, they were absolutely astounded.

How did Hanna and Melitta feel about the regime they worked under?

They were both proud German patriots with a strong sense of duty. However, they were committed to very different things: Hanna to the new Nazi regime, Melitta to a much older idea of Germany. They took diametrically opposed positions to Nazism. Hanna was delighted to be associated with Hitler's

"Hitler instantly recognised the huge potential of flight as a political machine"



Flying ace Hanna Reitsch, pictured here aged 29, keenly supported the Nazi regime

party, which she saw as bringing back commerce, jobs and pride to her country. Even when she was made aware of what was happening in the concentration camps, she was very willing to look away and accept the Nazi cause uncritically. After the war, Hanna claimed that she was apolitical and, perhaps because of her gender, she was viewed as naïve. But in reality she made an active choice to support the regime, and despite being put through the denazification process, she never revised her opinion. Letters Hanna wrote after the war reveal that she was deeply anti-Semitic and she wore her Iron Cross even when it was illegal to do so.

Melitta, on the other hand, was critical of the regime from the start. Her story shows how complicated survival could be inside Nazi Germany. Melitta's father had been born Jewish. In 1935, the Nuremberg laws meant that this Jewish ancestry – never relevant to Melitta before – suddenly became politically significant. Melitta's family were in increasing danger, so in order to protect them she applied for 'honorary Aryan' status, which wasn't forthcoming. By establishing herself as the leading expert on dive-bombing, Melitta made herself indispensable to the regime, giving weight to her application.

How were these women used to fuel the Nazi propaganda machine?

The media portrayed Hanna as a wonderful flying Fräulein and she became quite a celebrity. You'll see her in footage of Hitler's birthday concert in 1944. Dressed in her home-made pseudo uniform decorated with

Melitta Schiller in the cockpit. As well as heading up one of the main Nazi aeronautical research centres, Schiller undertook around 1,500 dive bomb tests. "These tests were hugely dangerous: pilots were at high risk of blacking out," says Clare Mulley



the Iron Cross, with her blonde air curled, she looked extremely glamorous, and very Aryan.

Hanna was more than happy to undertake various PR stunts for the regime. In 1938, at an international motorshow intended to demonstrate the nation's return to power, she became the first person to fly a helicopter indoors. After landing it, she emerged giving the Nazi salute. She was also used to boost morale during the war, sent to reinvigorate troops on the eastern front when things were going badly.

Melitta was also asked to do publicity work, but always managed to find an excuse. Eventually she buckled under the pressure and did a speech in Stockholm. Yet even then, she never actually mentioned Hitler or the Nazi regime. Instead she spoke about her country in vague, ambiguous terms.

Did the pair cross paths? How did they feel about one another?

You might imagine that the only two Nazi female test pilots might have felt some sort of sorority, but actually they loathed one another. It was said that Melitta wouldn't even have a cup of tea with Hanna. There were certainly some very frosty meetings. Hanna was very suspicious of Melitta and her political persuasions. She even insinuated that Melitta might have been trying to sabotage the war effort. With her father having been born Jewish, Melitta was really in a vulnerable position, so this was serious stuff. Hanna later stated there was nothing remarkable about Melitta's work and even

suggested that her Iron Cross wasn't valid. So there was no love lost between the two.

Did these women believe that their gender made them pioneers?

Hanna pushed for equal pay and opportunities, and even applied directly to senior Nazi leaders about the sexism she was experiencing. Melitta, on the other hand, considered herself an exception to the rule, and even said "we female pilots are not suffragettes". With more pressing concerns, she had no interest in advancing the feminist cause. She would do her day's work as a test pilot then go home, put on a pinafore and cook her husband dinner.

What can these two women's careers tell us about the contradictory ideology of the Nazi regime?

This story does highlight the contradictions of the regime. The Nazis claimed that the only place for women was in the home: one slogan was *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* meaning 'Children, Kitchen, Church'. They also claimed there was no role at all for Jews. Yet they gave these two women – one part-Jewish – integral roles in the war effort, and awarded them the military honour of the Iron Cross.

There are other apparent contradictions too. Hanna was not a party member, but was an avid Nazi who maintained her anti-Semitic worldview for the rest of her life, and never condemned the policies or practices of the Nazi regime. By contrast,

"You'd imagine the only two Nazi female test pilots might have felt some sort of sorority, but they loathed one another"

Melitta's war work was probably of greater value to the Nazis, yet in 1944 she was connected to the most famous German attempt on Hitler's life. These women were both brilliant pilots, both great patriots, and both incredibly courageous in different ways, but they responded very differently to the Nazi project. Ultimately it is the contrast in their beliefs, decisions and actions that

make their stories so fascinating and important. **H**



The Women Who Flew for Hitler: The True Story of Hitler's Valkyries by Clare Mulley (Pan Macmillan, 496 pages, £20)

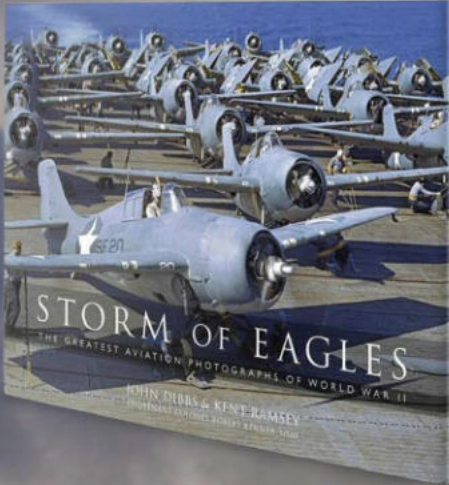
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EVENT

► Clare Mulley will be speaking at the **BBC History Magazine History Weekend** in York in November – see historyweekend.com

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REVIEWS



The donkeys that led the lions?
General Sir Herbert Plumer,
General Sir Herbert Lawrence and
Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig
are scrutinised in Ham's new book

idea to mount another such attack, particularly over the unpromising terrain of the Ypres salient: inundated with flood water, studded with German concrete pillboxes and laced with fields of barbed wire?

In this centenary study, Australian military historian Paul Ham gives the strategic and political background to the battle, which he sees as the defining tragedy in the greater disaster of the First World War, surpassing even the Somme in the futility of thousands of young lives thrown away for pitifully small territorial gains.

The goal of the Flanders offensive, according to the high command, was to neutralise the threat to Britain's food supplies posed by U-boats operating from their bases along the Belgian coast. A secondary motive was to take pressure off Britain's French ally, vulnerable and exhausted by its own failed offensives.

Though prime minister Lloyd George was sceptical of success, he did not have sufficient clout to overrule commander-in-chief Sir Douglas Haig and halt the offensive, even after it literally bogged down in the sea of slime masquerading as a battlefield – although he claimed later that he did his best to limit losses by starving Haig of fresh drafts of men to throw into the bloody morass.

As an Australian, Ham concentrates much attention on the huge contribution made by troops of the empire – Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians – seeing their generals, Birdwood, Currie and Monash, as more imaginative and caring for the men under their command than Haig and his protegee Hubert Gough.

An exception to Ham's generally damning view of the British high command 'donkeys' is Sir Herbert

For Ham, the battle surpasses even the Somme in the futility of lives thrown away for pitifully small gains

Muddy hell on earth

NIGEL JONES *admires a new work on a battle synonymous with the futility of First World War trench warfare*



Passchendaele: Requiem for Doomed Youth

by Paul Ham

Doubleday, 592 pages, £25



One hundred years ago, in July 1917, heralded by the usual prolonged preparatory artillery barrage, British and imperial forces launched a major offensive over the blasted and waterlogged Flanders fields around the shattered town of Ypres.

The third battle of Ypres – commonly known, from its final phase, as

Passchendaele – turned into a desperate slog in which men and their pack animals drowned in glutinous mud as they struggled not only against the German enemy, but also against the cruel weather, which poured relentless rain from the skies.

The 'big push' on the Somme the previous year had turned into a long battle of attrition which failed to achieve a decisive breakthrough in the frozen stasis on the western front. Another mass attack at Arras in the spring, despite the Canadian capture of Vimy ridge, had proved equally disappointing. Why, then, did the Allied high command think it a good



COMING SOON...

"Next issue, we'll be talking to Ronald Hutton about his latest book **The Witch**, plus our expert reviewers will be giving their verdict on new books, including Sean McMeekin's **The Russian Revolution** and **Koh-I-Noor** by William Dalrymple & Anita Anand"
 Matt Elton, reviews editor

Plumer, the general who masterminded the successful seizure of Messines ridge preceding the main offensive by exploding a score of massive mines under the German lines. Plumer took over field command of the battle from Gough in its later stages, and in a series of cautious, limited 'bite and hold' local attacks, his troops drove the Germans back to the rim of the salient and closed down the battle after seizing the ruins of Passchendaele village.

As its emotive subtitle indicates, Ham's book will not please the currently dominant school of Great War historians who hold that Haig's attritional attacks – "Boche killing", as one Haig aide described them – was the

Ham makes it clear that Haig's dogged persistence was mule-headed at best and idiotic at worst

only feasible strategy in the special circumstances of trench warfare. Though avoiding caricaturing Haig as a callous butcher, Ham makes it clear that his dogged persistence in pressing on with the offensive when all prospects of success had vanished was mule-headed at best and idiotic at worst.

Moreover, writes Ham, Haig's postwar justification of his strategy switched from his original stated goal of taking out the U-boat bases to wearing down German morale by simply slaughtering more of them than his own men: an aim anyway negated by 271,000 Allied casualties – more than the defending German total of 217,000. Visiting Passchendaele, I once heard the late military historian Richard Holmes describe the battle as a "victory on points". If Passchendaele was a victory, I shudder to discover what a defeat would have been like. **H**

Nigel Jones is a historian, journalist and biographer. His books include *Peace and War: Britain in 1914* (Head of Zeus, 2014)

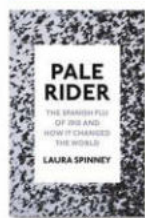
Invisible killer

PATRICIA FARA examines a book on the devastating flu epidemic that swept the world 100 years ago

Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How it Changed the World

by Laura Spinney

Jonathan Cape, 352 pages, £20



Coursing across the globe in successive waves 100 years ago, the invisible H1N1 influenza virus infected one in every three people. While the First World War was directly

responsible for 17 million deaths, its massive migrations of troops under cramped, insanitary conditions fostered an illness that killed between 40 and 100 million worldwide.

In *Pale Rider*, Laura Spinney provides a vivid account of the medical mysteries surrounding this exceptionally lethal disease and its long-term consequences. The main fascination of her wonderfully absorbing book lies in its international comparisons, reinforced by harrowing narratives of personal experiences.

Where you lived made an enormous difference to your chance of survival: in parts of Asia, the death rate was 30 times that in some European countries. Quarantine restrictions meant places like American Samoa remained infection-free; but in nearby Western Samoa, the authorities wrongly assumed it was an indigenous disease, and a quarter of its inhabitants died.

Spinney shows how a relatively small number of fatalities could have devastating effects on a

community. On her mortality map, the smallest black spot (0.5 per cent) marks New York city, but the largest (40 per cent) is in Alaska, where a litany of bungles resulted in entire villages being wiped out. The frozen remains of these northern victims are now being examined in a bid to determine the identity of Patient Zero, the presumed source of the epidemic.

Unexpectedly perhaps, Spain is not a contender. During the panic sparked by the first explosion of cases, everybody laid the blame elsewhere – Senegal dubbed it Brazilian flu, Brazilians favoured German flu – and the label that stuck was simply the one most commonly used by the winning side in the war. The first recorded case was an army cook stationed in Kansas, but medical opinion soon pointed to a peasant in China and, more recently, a gassed soldier in the densely packed hospitals at Étaples in France or a poor farmer working near the Kansas military base.

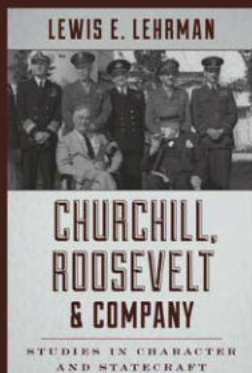
Pale Rider offers an important if unsettling reminder that stories about epidemics cannot be safely relegated to the past. The future – our present – was irrevocably altered by countless personal tragedies. In Sweden, each death from Spanish flu relegated four people to marginalised existences in the poor house. In contrast, the American family of a German immigrant carefully invested the money he left in his will. His grandson is called Donald J Trump. **H**

Dr Patricia Fara is president of the British Society for the History of Science and author of *Science: A Four Thousand Year History* (Oxford University Press, 2009)



A man in a customised version of a compulsory flu mask

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“Lewis E. Lehrman demonstrates an almost uncanny feel for all the senior personalities around Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Second World War.”

- **Prof. Andrew Roberts**, King's College, London, author of *Masters and Commanders: How Churchill, Roosevelt, Marshall and Alanbrooke Won the War in the West*.

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A collection of Sloane's artefacts, gathered from around the world, resides in London's Natural History Museum

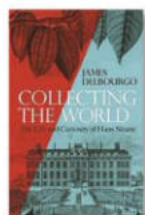
Vivid recollection

JACQUELINE YALLOP reads a riveting depiction of a visionary collector whose name has all but disappeared off the radar

Collecting the World: The Life and Curiosity of Hans Sloane

by James Delbourgo

Allen Lane, 544 pages, £25



In this lively biography, James Delbourgo unearths the motives that drove Britain's most successful collector, and explores the contexts that shaped him.

Hans Sloane's name remains embedded in London geography – in Sloane Square, for example – but he has mostly vanished from modern view in “a curious case of fame and amnesia combined”. Such neglect, Delbourgo argues, stems from the unusual diversity of Sloane's interests: as a result, both the man and his collections baffled later attempts to simplify and categorise.

We first meet Sloane in his home town of Killyleagh, County Down; an impressionable young man newly captivated by the natural world. Appointed as physician to the Duke of Albemarle's fleet, in 1687 he set sail

for Jamaica, returning two years later with numerous plant specimens and a deadly yellow snake. Delbourgo suggests that Sloane's early experiences as a traveller, and his upbringing within the distinctive Anglo-Irish community, greatly influenced the collector, so that for all his later success he struggled to shake off an outsider's unease.

In the book's second part, Sloane launches a London career as a physician, trading as much on his discretion and “trustworthy judgement” as his medical skill. For him, medicine and collecting were both about discovering truths and exposing the “follies of credulity”.

Nurturing an international network of enthusiasts, Sloane brought the world to Bloomsbury. This continual negotiation between the local and the

Delbourgo thoroughly investigates Sloane's links with the brutality of the slave trade

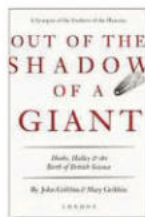
Science revision

CHARLOTTE SLEIGH considers a book that rewrites history by suggesting Sir Isaac Newton was a liar and a plagiariser

Out of the Shadow of a Giant

by John Gribbin and Mary Gribbin

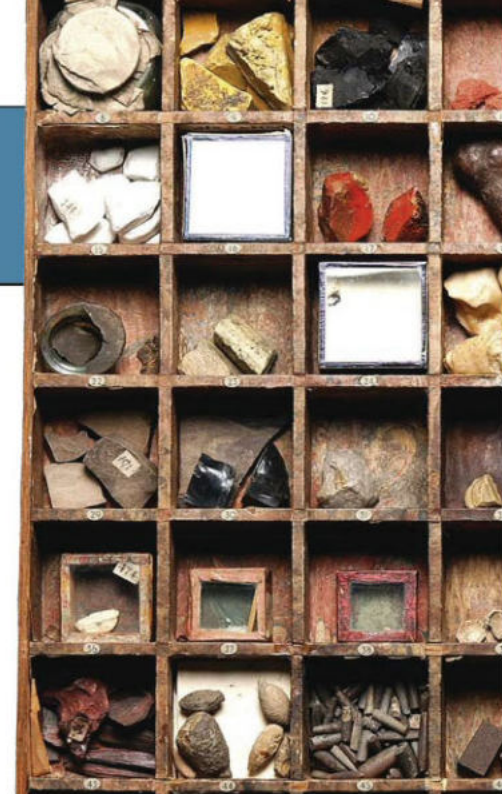
William Collins, 384 pages, £25



Sir Isaac Newton's well-known protestation that he merely stood “on the shoulders of giants” is regarded as a statement of modesty that confirms his place – as though genius were not enough – in the pantheon of British science.

What's less well known is that Newton's self-description came in a letter to his contemporary and sometime rival Robert Hooke – a short man who was sensitive about his height.

For John and Mary Gribbin, this is grist to the argument that Newton was a “known liar” who stole the science of Hooke and misappropriated the respect of a nation with his cooked-up tale of the falling apple. In *Out of the Shadow of a Giant*, the authors aim to recover the lost reputation of Hooke, along with



global was at the heart of the British Museum when it was founded with Sloane's treasures in 1753.

Delbourgo pays particular attention to the to-and-fro between personal and political, London and the wider world, the instinctive and the scientific. This nuanced portrayal of 18th-century life brims with vivid detail about everything from apothecarial arts to missionary zeal.

With courage and clarity, the narrative uncovers the ambiguities of such a prestigious career. Sloane's gung-ho approach to the natural world, as a resource for human use and profit, will sit uncomfortably with modern readers, as Delbourgo points out. He reminds us

that of Edmond Halley (of comet fame), another of Newton's contemporaries.

Hooke is a compelling figure. From an unprivileged background, he inserted himself into the life of the aristocratic Royal Society, played a pivotal role in reconstructing London after the Great Fire, developed microscopy and built the air pump whose operation stood at the centre of the new experimental science of the late 17th century.

However, for the authors, these known achievements are not enough. Hooke, they claim, also developed many things attributed to Newton: the first law of motion; the theory of optics; even that device beloved of 1980s yuppies, the so-called Newton's cradle. Verging upon the incredible, they propose that much



that Sloane offered his medical expertise to the poor without charge, while thoroughly investigating his links with the brutality of the slave trade: the equivalent of over £3m of Sloane's spending power, through his marriage, came directly from sugar plantations.

The Sloane heritage, Delbourgo concludes, is a "troubling" one. But it is a mark of the author's deft touch that he manages to capture the excitement and novelty of 18th-century collecting while holding it to account. **H**

Jacqueline Yallop is the author of *Magpies, Squirrels and Thieves: How the Victorians Collected the World* (Atlantic, 2011)

of modern earth science and Darwin's key theories are also traceable to Hooke.

Meanwhile, they castigate Newton for his "magical mumbo-jumbo", on account of his belief that there was some etheric substance filling the space between the heavenly bodies. Yet this was a common view at the time, expressed in various forms by natural philosophers including René Descartes and Christiaan Huygens.

This book does a good job of making the general corrective point that theories of individual genius do a disservice to the multitude of persons and networks that comprised science in the early-modern period – but it may have gone too far. **H**

Charlotte Sleigh is professor of science humanities at the University of Kent



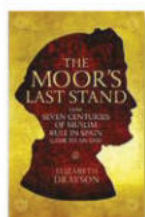
Twilight of Al-Andalus

FRANCOIS SOYER admires a new book that skilfully lays out the story of the last Muslim ruler of Spain

The Moor's Last Stand: How Seven Centuries of Muslim Rule in Spain Came to an End

by Elizabeth Drayson

Profile Books, 224 pages, £17.99



The year 1492 marked a turning point in Spanish history; it was the year that Granada, the last remaining Muslim state in the Iberian peninsula, was captured following 10 years of war. In this excellent book, Elizabeth Drayson focuses on the event, paying particular attention to the enigmatic emir Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad. Better known to modern historians as Boabdil, the last ruler of the Nasrid dynasty had the dubious privilege of handing the keys of Granada over to the victorious Catholic monarchs.

Our knowledge of Boabdil's life is derived from scarce Muslim and Christian sources, but Drayson expertly uses the limited evidence to humanise the emir; she reminds us that he was no traitor to his faith and people, but rather a man facing an impossible situation. An early defeat at Lucena in 1483 left him a prisoner of the Catholic monarchs, to whom he had to leave his son as a hostage. Squeezed between formidable Christian

opponents who sought to use him as a puppet, and a warlike uncle who wanted to depose him, Boabdil had little space for military and diplomatic manoeuvre.

Furthermore, this was not a conflict of heroic exploits and great battlefield victories, but a drawn-out war of attrition in which truces were interspersed with devastating raids and protracted sieges as the Christian forces closed in on Granada itself. The decisive siege of the strategic port of Malaga in 1487 was symptomatic of the way that internecine divisions undermined the emirate. The city's Muslim population held out bravely but received no help from either Boabdil or his uncle El Zagal, whose soldiers fought each other instead.

In the final chapter, Drayson traces the evolving perception of Boabdil after 1492: from despised traitor and Christian puppet to romantic impersonation of the brave but luckless hero. With elegant prose, her book clearly reconstructs the complicated politics of Granada and brings back to life a historical figure shrouded in mystery and legend. Her book is a pleasure to read and an excellent introduction to anyone wishing to delve into the twilight of Muslim Spain. **H**

Francois Soyer is a historian at the University of Southampton



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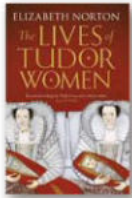
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The Lives of Tudor Women

by Elizabeth Norton

Head of Zeus, 416 pages, £9.99



The Tudors believed that life could be divided into phases, as articulated in *As You Like It*.

Shakespeare termed it the Seven Ages of Man and focused upon the male professions: schoolboy, soldier, justice of the peace, etc. This was typical of an age in which women were relegated to the status of second-class citizens – with one or two notable (royal) exceptions.

In her latest book, Elizabeth Norton tries to redress the balance by taking us through the seven phases of a Tudor woman's life. Drawing on examples such as Elizabeth of York, Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth I, she also explores a range of more obscure – but no less fascinating – women, from heretics and intellectuals to wool-spinners and witches. It's a brilliant idea for a book, and Norton executes it beautifully.

Not surprisingly, the first phase to be considered is childbirth. The production of healthy heirs was considered to be the primary function of women at all levels of society, but particularly royal wives. The book progresses to childhood and education, which was on the whole far more limited for girls than for boys. The scope of a young woman's ambitions was to marry well, so the business of "little love matters", as one Elizabethan courtier termed them, occupies the third age.

Drawing upon her impressive research, Norton challenges some of the



Newborns are nursed in the 16th century, when producing heirs was considered a woman's primary function

stereotypes by exploring the (admittedly small) minority of women who were able to pursue business interests in their own right. She also brings to light highly intelligent and impassioned reformers such as Katherine Parr, who almost paid the ultimate price for defying social conventions.

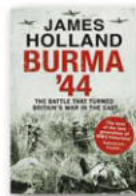
A woman's seventh age was, in many ways, the cruellest period of them all. Having outlived her usefulness as the producer of children, she was vilified as a venomous old crone with no positive contribution to make to society. Little wonder, then, that Elizabeth I invested so much effort into preserving the "mask of youth".

Tracy Borman has written several books on the Tudor period

Burma '44

by James Holland

Corgi Books, 300 pages, £9.99



The 14th Army in Burma during the Second World War was known as the 'Forgotten Army' and most of

its campaigns remain little known. James Holland's book about the battle of the Admin Box is a first-rate popular history of a fascinating and neglected battle.

The battle was fought in February 1944 when Japanese forces penetrated the rear administrative area of Major-General Frank Messervy's 7th Indian Division – hence the name. In savage, close-

quarter fighting, the British, Indian and Gurkha defenders, supported by the RAF, held off the Japanese, who after three weeks were forced to retreat. It was the first significant victory of British-Indian forces in Burma.

James Holland is a master of spinning narrative military history from accounts of men and women who were there, and *Burma '44* is a veritable page-turner. Holland acknowledges he has told a mainly British story, given the paucity of Indian, Gurkha and Japanese sources. The Admin Box was a complex battle, but to Holland's credit the reader is never overwhelmed by detail. **H**

Gary Sheffield is professor of war studies at the University of Wolverhampton



A scene from a 14th-century health handbook. A medieval man's travels into the future are at the heart of Ian Mortimer's intriguing novel

FICTION

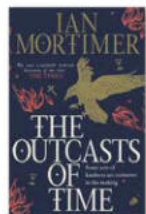
Forward thinking

NICK RENNISON embarks on a journey through the centuries as historian Ian Mortimer explores a novel new direction

The Outcasts of Time

by Ian Mortimer

Simon & Schuster, 400 pages, £12.99



What would a 14th-century man make of the centuries that followed? This is the intriguing question that Ian Mortimer (author of *The Time Traveller's Guide to*

Medieval England) tries to answer in *The Outcasts of Time*, the first novel he's published under his own name.

In 1348, England is in the grip of the Black Death. Brothers John, a stonemason, and William, a wool merchant, are struggling to make their way back to the West Country town they call home. Men, women and children are dying all around them, and it soon becomes clear that the brothers are infected with the plague, too. An enigmatic, disembodied voice offers them a choice: they can continue their doomed journey, or lose the symptoms of the plague, travel forward 99 years on each of six succeeding days, and seek what salvation they can in

the future (though at the end of those six days, death will still await them).

They choose to time-travel but the year 1447 does little to bring them comfort. And England in 1546 and 1645 is even more unsettling. Circumstances are such that they force John to journey further forward in time alone. In the 18th and 19th centuries, he finds wonders he could not have imagined in his own age, but still no answers to the questions about the meaning of his life that torment him. In 1942, he encounters a world at war, and his own long-postponed death is at hand.

In *The Outcasts of Time*, Mortimer trespasses on fantasy-novel territory, but his mixing of genres is fascinating. His historian's eye for detail conjures up convincingly the new centuries the brothers discover, while their travels force them (and us) to think about the broader significance of human lives and human society. We're all rooted in a present intimately shaped by the past, and, as John finally comes to recognise, "home is not a place but a time". **H**

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

THREE MORE NOVELS SPANNING THE CENTURIES

Ulverton

Adam Thorpe (1992)



Thorpe invents a West Country village and then, through 12 very different narratives, peoples it with individuals from centuries past.

From a 17th-century vicar delivering a sermon to his flock, to a 19th-century labourer speaking in rich dialect, the voices of Ulverton are brilliantly brought to life. Each chapter works as an individual story, but they weave together to form the longer history of the village across 300 years.

London

Edward Rutherfurd (1997)



Since he debuted with *Sarum* in 1987, Rutherfurd has published a number of epic novels that trace the histories of cities and countries.

In this book, he begins in Roman London, then, through 800 pages and nearly two millennia, charts the intertwined fortunes of six families living and working in the country's capital. Real individuals such as Chaucer and Shakespeare share the stage with Rutherfurd's own creations in the remarkable tale of one of the world's great cities.

Barkskins

Annie Proulx (2016)



At the end of the 17th century, two men arrive in the wilds of New France, the French colonial territories in North America. Charles

Duquet and René Sel, escapees from the slums of Paris, are both indentured servants, known as 'barkskins', and Proulx's saga follows their fortunes, and those of their descendants, across three centuries. *Barkskins* offers an epic vision of man's relentless struggle to subdue nature and the environment.



Jonathan Wright previews the pick of upcoming programmes

TV & RADIO



Sugar-spun stories

Back to Work: Confectioners

TV BBC Two

Scheduled for July

In the Tudor and Stuart eras, eating sugary food was a pleasure reserved for the richest, such was the cost of a commodity that had to be imported. The story of how we got from there to an era when we're told we eat too much sugar is the subject of a new living history series.

Presented by food historian Dr Annie Gray and Emma Dabiri from SOAS, University of London, the series also follows four skilled confectioners as they recreate the recipes of yesteryear. Along the way, among other highlights, the quartet have to get to grips with 'open arse' fruit.



General Custer's last stand is one of the stories told by Robert Redford

Wild boys

Robert Redford's the American West

TV History

From Tuesday 27 June

Executive-produced by a man who famously played the Sundance Kid, this eight-part docudrama chronicles life out west in the three decades that followed the American Civil War.

Don't expect too many tales of day-to-day life on ranches – the series promises shoot-'em-up tales of such figures as Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and George Custer. Adding some glitter to the heat and dust, famous film cowboys, including James Caan, Kiefer Sutherland and Kris Kristofferson, add their perspectives.

Regarding Henry

Professor Sarah Churchwell tells us why we should all be reading Henry James

Innocents Abroad

RADIO Radio 4, scheduled for 20 July

As Professor Sarah Churchwell acknowledges, American émigré novelist Henry James (1843–1916) has a reputation as a “difficult” and “serious” writer. “It all sounds very intimidating and joyless, when the experience of reading him is anything but,” she says.

As part of a Radio 4 season that also includes dramatisations of three of James's early works, including *The Portrait of a Lady*, Churchwell's documentary seeks to rehabilitate the novelist for modern audiences. The Trump era is an especially apposite moment to do this because it was James who invented the idea of clashes between the ‘old world’ and the ‘new world’, often seen through the prism of American travellers – the “innocents abroad” of the documentary's title – misreading Europe and Europeans.

“These [confrontations] were based around the idea that cultural power was basically in Europe at that time, whereas increasingly America had financial power, but little sense of cultural entitlement,” she says. “Today the balance of

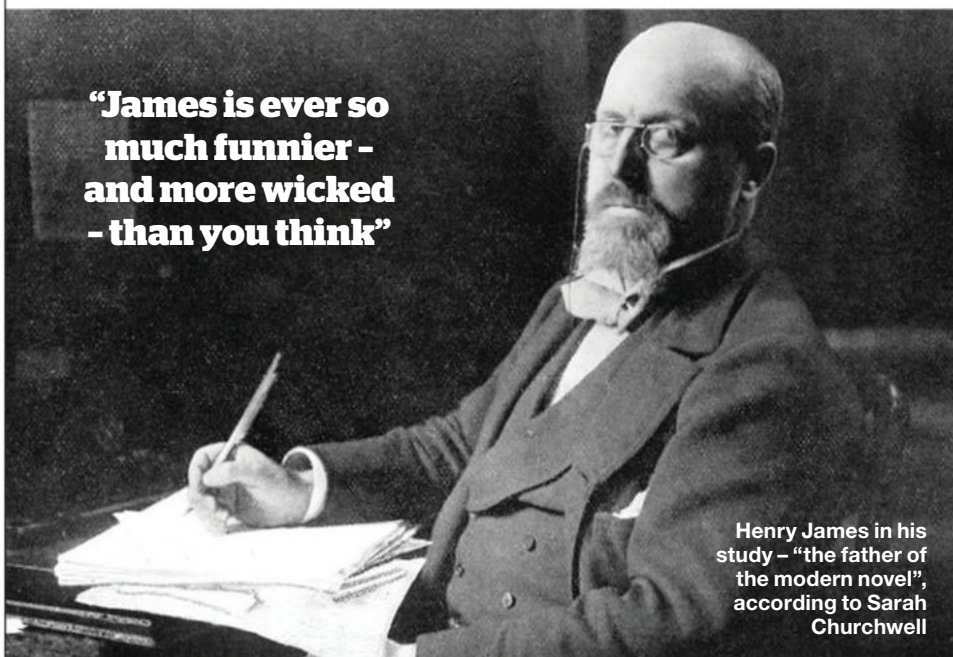
power between Europe and America is very much in flux, and James has all kinds of insights about the assumptions both cultures make about each other.”

He was also a kind of proto-feminist and Churchwell contends he “remains to date the only male novelist to be primarily interested in writing about women”, perhaps because, as a gay man in a homophobic world, he identified with their situations. “Most important, he doesn't treat women as a different species, as if we're somehow human in a different way from men,” she says.

More than this, says Churchwell, alongside Joseph Conrad, he was “the father of the modern novel” in English. “James took the psychological novel, as basically invented by Jane Austen, and pushed it to become the novel of consciousness. Before Freud, he was the first to understand that human psychology could be the story – that it is the story.”

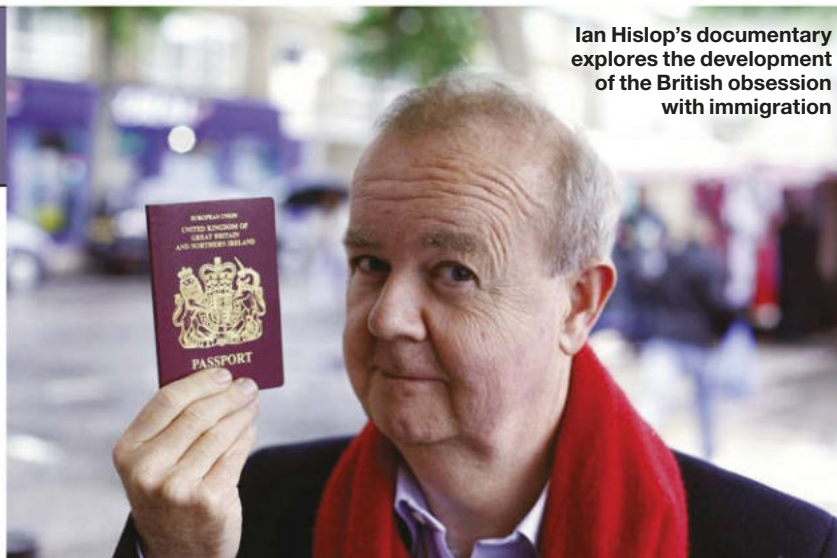
Certainly, some of James's later novels are challenging. But don't let that put you off, advises Churchwell: “He's ever so much funnier – and more wicked – than you think.” ■

“James is ever so much funnier - and more wicked - than you think”



Henry James in his study – “the father of the modern novel”, according to Sarah Churchwell

Ian Hislop's documentary explores the development of the British obsession with immigration



Following borders

Who Should We Let In?
Ian Hislop on the First Great Immigration Row
TV BBC Two

Thursday 22 June

We often think of the Victorians as buttoned up, repressed. Yet in one key respect, British society in the mid-19th century was far more open than it is today. This was an era when Britain allowed anyone to come to the country to live and work, when free trade was indivisible from free movement.

What changed? How did the idea of controlling immigration become so central to national politics? It's a story told

by Ian Hislop in a one-off documentary that delights in showing us 19th-century and early 20th-century history we should know but don't.

Jewish immigration in the late Victorian era, driven by pogroms in eastern Europe, is central to the story. Against a backdrop of fears over employment, and the make-up of communities changing, parliament passed the Aliens Act of 1905. For the first time, Britain had immigration controls. Major Sir William Evans-Gordon played a key role in the act. But we also meet those arguing to take people in, such as Flora Shaw, a central force in Britain sheltering 250,000 Belgian refugees during the First World War.

Racism and resistance

Guerilla

DVD (Spirit Entertainment Ltd, £14.99)

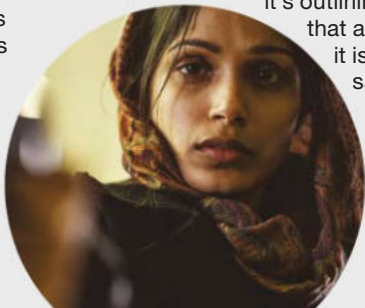
The history of British 'black power' activism has long been under the radar. **Guerilla**, a six-part drama written by John Ridley (*12 Years a Slave*), seeks to redress this. Set in 1971, it tells the story of what might have happened had British activists taken up arms.

The decision of Jas (Freida Pinto), Marcus (Babou Ceesay) and others to turn to the gun and the bomb is shown in the context of violent times – and of ingrained racism within British society that found expres-

sion in the way the 1971 Immigration Act favoured white Commonwealth immigrants. Community leader Kent (Idris Elba) articulates the case for peaceful campaigning. For all that the focus here is largely on the activists, the series is structured in key respects as a police procedural. As the activists' terror cell prepares an attack, New Scotland Yard's Black Power desk is ranged against it.

At moments, *Guerilla* groans rather under the weight of the history that it's outlining, but you can see that as evidence of why

it is such a necessary series as much as a criticism. The performances are nuanced and the final instalment in particular is a masterclass in switch-back storytelling.



Freida Pinto plays activist-turned-guerilla Jas Mitra in this gripping drama

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...



Stories of US soldiers in the First World War are told in *The Great War*

The current series of **In Our Time** (BBC Radio 4) is coming to an end, with just two more history-related discussions with Melvyn Bragg and his expert guests slated. On Thursday 22 June, the subject is *Eugene Onegin*, Alexander Pushkin's novel in verse. On Thursday 29 June, the discussion centres on Plato's *Republic*.

Rather less serious is the continuing **Paul Sinha's History Revision** (Thursday 22 June), in which the comedian and quizzer relates historical stories "that we have forgotten in our onward march of progress".

On Yesterday, **Royal Murder Mysteries** (Tuesday 27 June) continues. It includes an episode about the now little-remembered Prince Albert Victor, Edward VII's eldest son and a young man his grandmother, Queen Victoria, saw as "dissipated". There's more royal history in a re-run of **Prince John: The Windsors' Tragic Secret** (Yesterday, Tuesday 4 July), which tells the story of John Charles Francis of Wales, the youngest son of George V, who suffered from severe epilepsy and died aged just 13.

On PBS America, **The Great War** (Monday 26–Wednesday 28 June) charts the conflict from an American perspective, drawing on unpublished diaries, memoirs and letters from nurses, journalists, aviators and 'doughboys', as American troops were nicknamed.

While no transmission date has yet been confirmed, the fifth season of the Victorian-era police procedural **Ripper Street** (previously shown via Amazon Prime) looks set to appear on BBC Two this summer.

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OUT & ABOUT

HISTORY EXPLORER

The power of British iron

Nige Tassell and Richard Hayman explore **Ironbridge Gorge**, the crucible of one of the most important developments of the industrial revolution

On an unhurried, sunny spring afternoon, the Shropshire village of Ironbridge resembles a rural idyll barely touched by the industrial world. The river Severn slips gently by, its banks full and verdant, while daytrippers divide their time between its ice-cream parlours and its excellent secondhand bookshop. Across the road, a gaggle of French schoolchildren hold up their phones to take pictures of the structure that gave both the village and the gorge its name.

Built in 1779, the bridge whose gentle parabola elegantly spans the river is a clue to the gorge's industrial past. This was the world's first cast-iron bridge, one forged just a mile or so away at the large ironworks at Coalbrookdale. The bridge isn't the only clue to a less idyllic past. Industrial archaeology is present everywhere you turn, whether it's the remains of blast furnaces beside the river bank or workers' cottages dotting the landscape. For those not spotting the clues, the gorge boasts no fewer than 10 excellent museums, all run by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. Each museum fills in the blanks until there are no blanks left to fill.

Had the daytrippers been here 200 years ago, they would have been confronted with rather a different outlook. For starters, the river would have been bustling with

activity; the Severn was the main outlet for the gorge's products, whether iron, pottery or tiles. Indeed, during the industrial revolution, it was the second busiest river in Europe. Had the daytrippers then ventured a mile or two north, they would have encountered a scene somewhat noisier and dirtier than today.

Infernal regions

In 1787, the visiting Italian aristocrat Carlo Castone della Torre di Renzionico Comasco described what he saw in vivid terms: "The approach to Coalbrookdale appeared to be a veritable descent to the infernal regions. A dense column of smoke rose from the earth; volumes of steam were ejected from fire engines; a blacker cloud issued from a tower in which was a forge, and smoke arose from a mountain of burning coals which burst out into turbid flames."

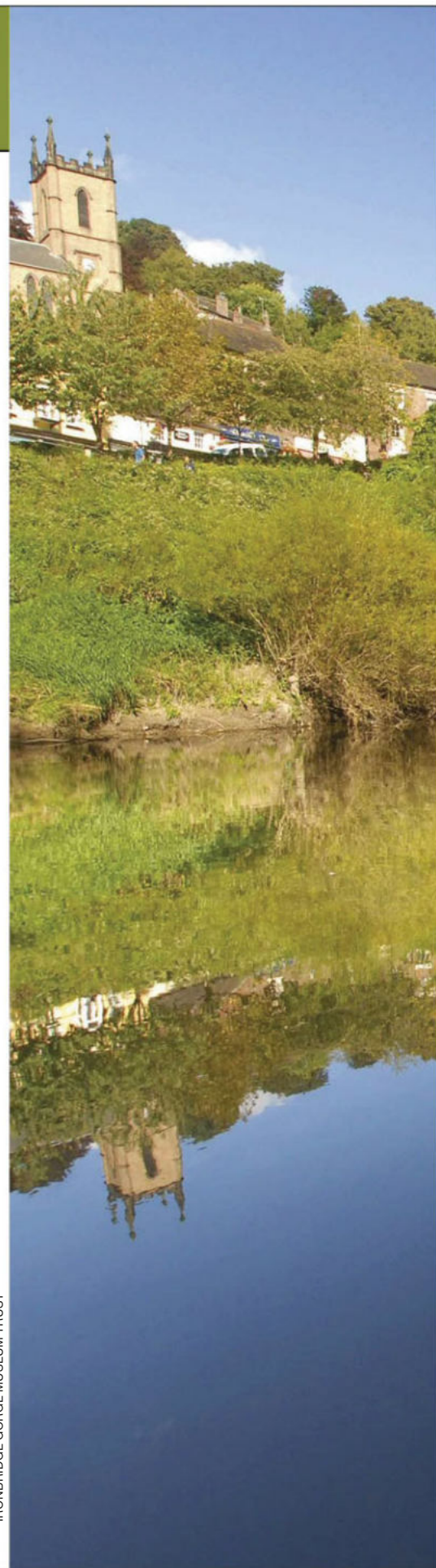
Thankfully, Coalbrookdale in 2017 is a rather more peaceful proposition. The site is now the home of the freshly revamped Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron. Right from its first exhibit, this fascinating museum explains why the region attracted ironworkers from the late medieval period onwards. It was all to do with that river. The Severn originally flowed northwards, from

Welshpool to the Dee Estuary.

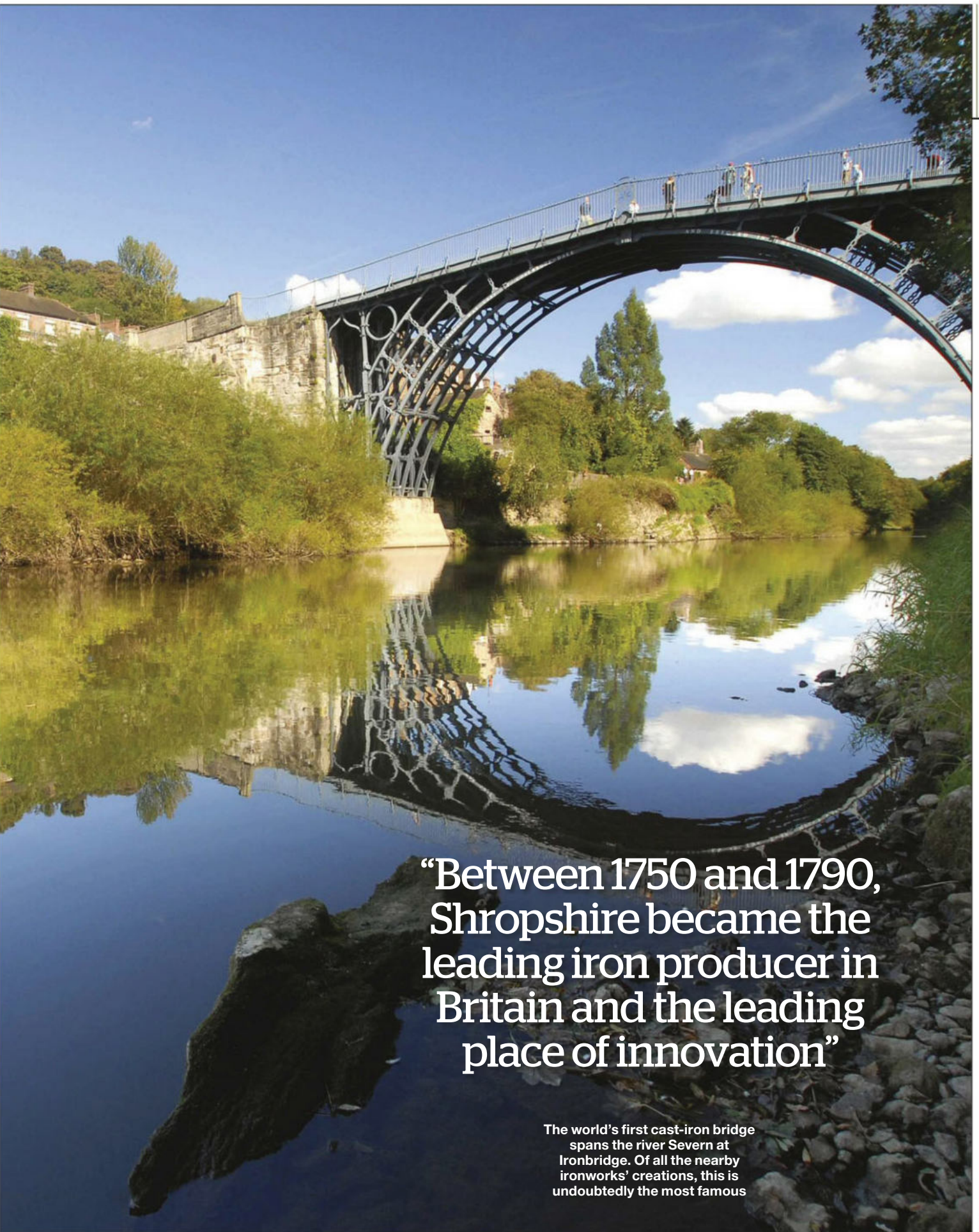
However, the Ice Age forced a change in direction and, in flowing south, it carved the gorge, cutting through the soft limestone.

In doing so, it revealed what lay beneath, strata of limestone, clay, coal and iron ore. All of this would become far

The Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron charts the region's links with ironworking all the way back to the Middle Ages



IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST



“Between 1750 and 1790, Shropshire became the leading iron producer in Britain and the leading place of innovation”

The world's first cast-iron bridge spans the river Severn at Ironbridge. Of all the nearby ironworks' creations, this is undoubtedly the most famous



Industrial hot spot: the original blast furnace employed by Abraham Darby is now housed in a weather-proof glass building

easier to extract than in different locations. Mining didn't have to go downwards to reach each particular raw material; it could be extracted by simply going sideways. The conditions for the iron industry were more than conducive. As the 18th-century ironmaster George Perry later remarked, it was "as if Nature had intended this place for an Iron Foundry [sic]".

The land surrounding the gorge had belonged to the priory of nearby Much Wenlock until it was bought by the Brooke family following Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. A blast furnace was built on the site in 1658, but it wasn't until a certain Abraham Darby arrived in the early 18th century and leased its use that Shropshire would become renowned the world over for its iron production. This man was the reason for the gorge's indelible industrial footprint.

Choosing coke

"When Abraham Darby came to Coalbrookdale in 1708," explains author and industrial historian Richard Hayman, "the furnace wasn't actually in use. He had selected Coalbrookdale because the ore mined there had a lot of phosphorous in it. This meant it wasn't very good for making wrought iron but was very good for making cast iron. But when he went there, he didn't have ambitions to revolutionise the iron industry."

But revolutionise it he did. The established method for smelting iron was to use charcoal, but this wasn't in infinite supply. "There was a lot of woodland around," says Hayman, "but it had been leased to other people, so the furnace struggled to find enough charcoal to fuel it." Darby, instead, chose to use coke (essentially baked coal) to smelt the iron. Although not the first to try this method, he refined the process and was the one to make it commercially viable.

"Although they'd experimented with smelting with coke at Coalbrookdale before, there hadn't really been any sustained production of it to establish it as an alternative to charcoal. Darby spent three or four years trying to find the best-quality coal to convert into coke. Eventually – and unexpectedly – they found that poor-grade coal, which wouldn't sell too well because it was in small lumps, was the best for converting into coke for the blast furnace."

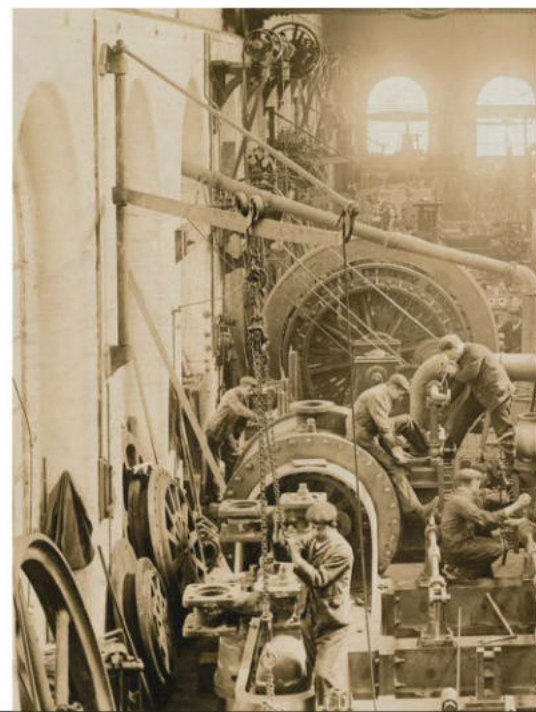
Not that Darby alone can be seen as the great innovator or visionary. "It wasn't a question of him conceiving of the idea to transform the industry," cautions Hayman. "It was a necessity. And he relied on the expertise of his workmen to achieve it. When he came to Shropshire from Bristol, Darby didn't know how to run a blast furnace. It was the workmen who were the experts. Darby was funding it. He was the

one experimenting by bringing in coal from various sources."

Darby began the mass production of pots and cauldrons, but died just nine years after arriving in Coalbrookdale. His son – Abraham Darby II – took on the business when he was of age and was the one to really drive it forward, to give it national attention. Until then, the other iron-producing areas – such as the Weald of Kent and Sussex, and the Forest of Dean – sold their products locally. The younger Darby began to cast cylinders and other parts for steam engines, the real driver of the industrial revolution, and opened two further ironworks nearby. As

IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST

ABRAHAM DARBY USED COKE, NOT CHARCOAL, TO SMELT IRON. HE REFINED THIS PROCESS, MAKING IT COMMERCIALLY VIABLE





VISIT

Ironbridge Gorge



South of Telford, Shropshire

● ironbridge.org.uk

Hayman notes: "Between 1750 and 1790, Shropshire had become both the leading iron producer in Britain and the leading place of innovation." It wasn't long-lasting, though. By the end of the century, it had been eclipsed by south Wales, where iron ore could simply be dug up in fields rather than being mined underground.

By the time that the iron bridge was erected in 1779, Abraham Darby III was now running the company. "My take on him is that he always knew about the achievements of his father and grandfather and so had a lot to look up to," says Hayman. "His ambition to build this marvellous bridge was part of

that, of reaching the level of his forebears.

"He was very keen to promote the idea that he was building a new kind of bridge, but I imagine the impact of it went way beyond what he envisaged for it. Iron bridges would have been built with or without Darby, but he certainly produced a superb advert for them. The reason it became famous was that a lot of people came to visit it. And the more people that visited it, the more it appeared in guidebooks as an interesting destination."

Size and scale

With its numerous museums, Ironbridge Gorge is now more interesting to the visitor than ever. You can still explore the original blast furnace, which is just across a pleasant grass area from the iron museum. Housed in a triangular, weather-proof glass building, its size and scale is extremely impressive.

The gorge is also home to museums representing its other industries at the time (the Coalport China Museum and the Jackfield Tile Museum), the Darby Houses (which the family's successive generations called home), the hands-on technology centre Enginuity, and Blists Hill Victorian Town.

The latter, featuring a working foundry, is a tremendous re-creation of everyday life back in the age of heavy industry and steam, when folk didn't have the luxury of mooching around secondhand bookshops and frequenting ice-cream parlours. Another time, another place. **H**



Richard Hayman is an archaeologist and author of several books, including *The Iron Industry* (Bloomsbury Shire, 2016).
Words: Nige Tassell

THE IRON INDUSTRY: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Clearwell Caves

CLEARWELL, FOREST OF DEAN

Where iron was mined for millennia

Iron ore has been mined at Clearwell Caves for thousands of years and you can glimpse that history at what is now a working museum. Nine large caverns are open to visitors and there are also several displays on the history and geology of the area.

clearwellcaves.com

2 Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum

SKINNINGROVE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Where the life of a miner is revealed

In the 19th century the Tees Valley was home to 83 iron mines, the first of which was established at Skinningrove in 1848. Visitors experience what life was like for miners as they extracted iron ore that would be used across the world, including in the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

ironstonemuseum.co.uk

3 Blaenavon Ironworks

BLAENAVON, NEAR PONTYPOOL

Where south Wales ruled the world

The Blaenavon Ironworks began production in 1789 and rose to be one of the main centres of iron production in the world. The remains of its blast furnaces reveal a long-past world, further explained by reconstructed buildings.

visitblaenavon.co.uk

4 Duddon Iron Furnace

BROUGHTON-IN-FURNESS, CUMBRIA

Where you can explore a furnace

Built in 1736, Broughton-in-Furness is home to the best-preserved charcoal blast furnace in the north of England. While Coalbrookdale in Shropshire led the way in coke-fired smelting, the ready supply of wood in Cumbria meant that the county had many charcoal-fuelled furnaces.

visitcumbria.com

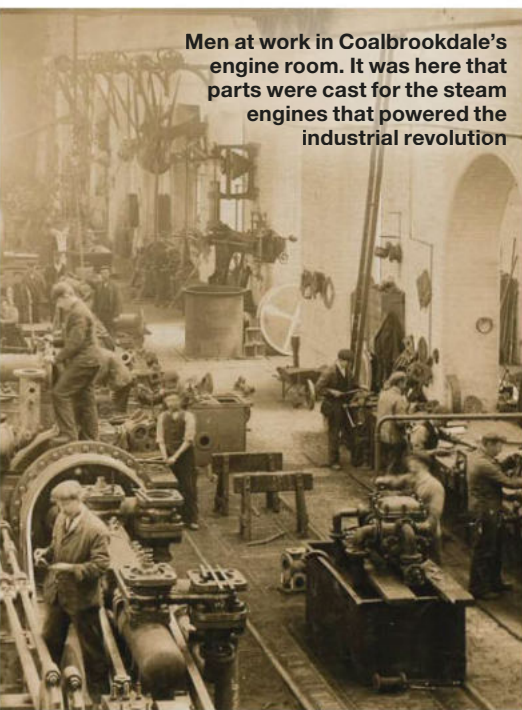
5 Bonawe Ironworks

ARGYLL, SCOTLAND

Where cannonballs began life

Founded in 1753, Bonawe Ironworks tapped the potential of Argyll's woodlands to produce iron for everything from cannonballs for the Napoleonic Wars to monuments of Admiral Nelson. Today, visitors can see inside the blast furnace and the huge charcoal sheds, all in a stunning setting at the head of Loch Etive.

visitscotland.com



Men at work in Coalbrookdale's engine room. It was here that parts were cast for the steam engines that powered the industrial revolution

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Tom Holland ●



Roy Hattersley ●●



Kathryn Hughes ●



Dan Jones ●●



Miranda Kaufmann ●●



Ryan Lavelle ●



Nick Lloyd ●●



Keith Lowe ●●



Pankaj Mishra ●



Marc Morris ●●



Ian Mortimer ●●



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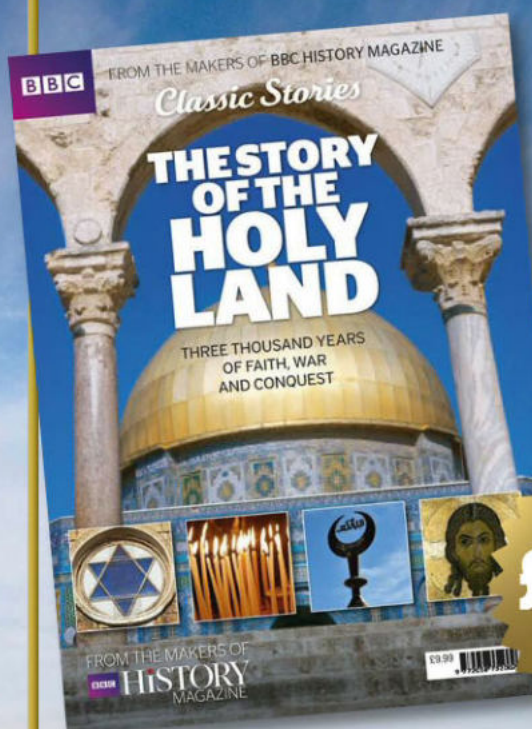
Ellie Woodacre ●

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FIVE THINGS TO DO IN JULY

Lost at sea

EXHIBITION

**Death in the Ice:
The Shocking Story of
Franklin's Final Expedition**
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
14 July–7 Jan 2018

☎ 020 8312 6608 (booking line)

● rmg.co.uk



On 19 May 1845 Sir John Franklin and his 128-man crew, aboard HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, set sail with the hope of traversing the whole of the North-West Passage – a navigable channel that was believed to connect the North Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, providing a trade route with Asia. It was the biggest expedition that Britain had ever sent to the Arctic region but, after 1847, nothing more was ever heard from the men again, despite a series of rescue missions. It wasn't until 2014 that the wreck of HMS *Erebus* was found, followed in 2016 by that of HMS *Terror*.

This month, the National Maritime Museum is launching an exhibition to explore the mysterious fate of Franklin and his crew, displaying finds from *Erebus*, including personal items, clothing and components of the ship. These items will be on show in Britain for the very first time.

As well as attempting to unravel the mystery of the expedition's disappearance, the exhibition will explore the Victorian fascination with the Arctic as well as the significant role of Inuit in discovering the fate of the expedition. This exhibition is part of a season of talks and events relating to Franklin's final journey.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
A sea boot from Franklin's last expedition, retrieved in 1879; a pocket chronometer found in Erebus bay; snow goggles; the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order awarded to Franklin in 1836

EXHIBITION

Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power

Tate Modern, London
12 July–22 October

☎ 020 7887 8888

● tate.org.uk

Some 150 artworks go on show this July, charting the contribution of black artists to the American Civil Rights movement. The displays include works by Betye Saar and Romare Bearden.



EXHIBITION

Battles & Dynasties

The Collection, Lincoln
Until 3 September

☎ 01522 782040

● thecollectionmuseum.com

Conflict for the crown from Domesday to the present day is the theme of an exhibition in Lincoln. Among the items on display is Domesday Book – on show outside London for the first time in nearly 1,000 years – as well as a 1215 copy of Magna Carta and a Charter of the Forest from 1217. Van Dyck's triple portrait of Charles I is also on show.

'We Shall Survive Without a Doubt' by Emory Douglas, 1971

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

From Kabul to Kolkata: Highlights of Indian Painting in the Fitzwilliam Museum
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Until 3 September

☎ 01223 332900

● fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

As India celebrates 70 years of independence, the Fitzwilliam Museum has launched an exhibition of Indian miniature paintings and drawings, from the 16th–19th centuries. Works on show include those produced during the patronage of the Mughal dynasty (1526–1857).

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

Reformation

Senate House Library, University of London
26 June–15 December
☎ 020 7862 8500

● senatehouselibrary.ac.uk

Marking the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's publication of the *Ninety-five Theses*, this exhibition traces the impact of the Protestant Reformation on culture and society in London during the 16th and early 17th centuries. The exhibition will also consider how the city's communications industry helped to drive change during this period.

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

Vietnam



by **Sasha Mullally**

For the latest in our historical holiday series, Sasha explores a south-east Asian country steeped in tradition, culture and colour

Hanoi traffic never stops. The drivers whizz along on motorbikes of various makes and sizes, often carrying their entire families with them. And the Vietnamese navigate their history like they navigate their streets – with a stunning casualness that belies the weight of all they carry around with them.

Vietnam is a beautiful, challenging country that many have loved, and more have coveted, over the centuries. I spent a month largely hopping among some of its major cities. One trip is simply not enough – especially for history fans.

I was first struck by how Hanoi (Vietnam's capital) retains some of the desirable elements of French culture, almost as a form of reverse colonisation. Though independence was formally granted here in 1954, hotel restaurants routinely serve up fragrant baguettes and perfect omelettes, and some of the old men sitting around the city's West Lake will readily speak French to tourists. Some tour guides claim that Ho Chi Minh himself trained as a pastry chef in Paris, where he was radicalised through friendships with members of the Socialist

Party of France. Traffic through the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, a venue always packed with tourists and Vietnamese alike, reflects the deep reverence Vietnamese continue to feel for their revolutionary leader, who died in 1969.

But there's even deeper history found *underneath* Hanoi. During my visit, the 1,300-year-old Thang Long Imperial Citadel was being excavated as people went about their everyday business, and students came and went from the nearby Temple of Literature – Vietnam's first national university, which traces its history back to 1070. All of this serves as a reminder that the foreign forces who've either occupied or tried to occupy the

city – French, Japanese, US and, briefly at the end of the Second World War, Chinese – seem like fickle adventurers in a longer arc of history, especially when considered from dwellings renovated over the sites of thousand-year-old homes in Hanoi's Hoan Kiem district.

Communist, republican, colonial and imperial pasts collide in the mid-coast city of Hue. Situated on the Perfume river, Hue is an important trading town. It sat around 100km south of the demilitarised zone during the 'American War', and was taken by communist forces during the famous 1968 Tet Offensive. It was also the imperial capital of Vietnam from 1802 to 1945. The Imperial City walled palace, and several emperors' tombs located on the outskirts of Hue, are all undergoing restoration as the government recognises their potential as heritage sites and possible tourist attractions.

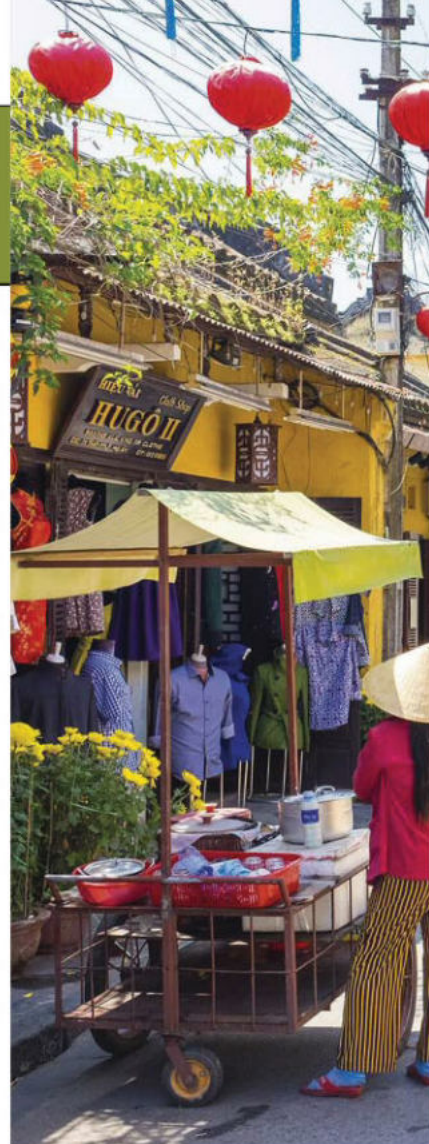
Ancient history certainly attracts tourists to the picturesque city of Hoi An, a medieval Unesco World Heritage site located one spectacularly scenic half day's drive south of Hue. Hoi An has been taken over by tailor shops specialising in made-to-measure apparel – an excellent place to get suits

copied cheaply. But it's also near an archaeological site for the Indic civilisation of Champa, traders who dominated the mid-coast from the second to the 15th centuries. The best examples of ancient Champa are located further down the coast near Quy Nhon, a south-central port city with wide beaches and one of the best collections of Cham artefacts to be found in south-east Asia. These are all archaeological reminders that Vietnam has for centuries sat on the borderlands of ancient Hindu and Buddhist civilisations.

Ho Chi Minh City, on the Saigon river, also switched hands over time, and was known as Saigon until 1976 when it was renamed for Vietnam's beloved leader, 'Uncle Ho'. Tourists wanting to sample state-sanctioned history visit the War Remnants Museum, and especially the



A dragon statue at Hue's Imperial City





Hoi An is at its most charming during its monthly Lantern Festival, which ties in with the full moon

“Vietnam is a challenging and beautiful country that many have coveted over the centuries

Hall of Historical Truths on the second floor, where the struggle for independence is related in fine detail, along with the lasting effects of Agent Orange. The nearby Reunification Hall/Independence Palace (formerly the home of South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu) feels like one has gone back in time to the *Mad Men* era. Completed in 1966, the building and décor set a dramatic backdrop for the fall

of Saigon in 1975, complete with an escape helicopter on a landing pad outside the president’s office.

Outside the city, the Cu Chi Tunnels historic site depicts the tenacity (and diminutive size) of two generations of revolutionaries, who launched their counter-insurgency efforts from a massive underground maze right under the noses of French and US militaries.

But one often wonders who ‘won’ the war in this hotbed of south-east Asian consumer culture. The name of the city is de-politicised; Vietnamese millennials simply refer to it now as ‘HCMC’. Even the former

tools of communist indoctrination are for sale; one of the liveliest shops in the tourist quarter sells reproduction propaganda posters from the early years of the Socialist Republic. It reflects a new adage about cultural and economic divisions within the country: “In Hanoi, you write books,” they say. “In Saigon, you write cheques.”

One could probably write a book about a single visit to Vietnam, but I can’t wait to write a cheque and go back there again. **II**

Sasha Mullally is associate professor at the department of history, University of New Brunswick

Read more of Sasha’s experiences at historyextra.com/vietnam

Next month: Eleanor Barraclough explores Arctic Norway

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Spring and autumn are the most popular times to visit among western tourists, as temperatures are pleasant and rainfall is much lighter.

GETTING THERE

Vietnam Airlines offers direct flights from London Heathrow to Hanoi Noi Bai (it takes around 12 hours, so you’ll have plenty of time to study your phrasebook!), but many of Vietnam’s major cities have airports.

WHAT TO PACK

It makes sense to get a month-long tourist Visa – with so much to see, you won’t want a shorter stay. A filtered face mask is also recommended, especially if you’re planning to be out doing active things or riding on a motorbike – the atmosphere can get heavy.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Before leaving the UK, choose one of your favourite outfits to take with you. You’ll be able to get it copied very cheaply at one of the tailors in Hoi An.

READERS’ VIEWS

Visit the Cu Chi Tunnels and War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh @Stubacca30

Old Town in Hoi An is great
Bradley Evelyn

Halong Bay is simply stunning. And the food all over Vietnam is brilliant
Stuart Fairbairn



Been there...

Have you visited **Vietnam**? Do you have a top tip for readers? Contact us via Twitter or Facebook

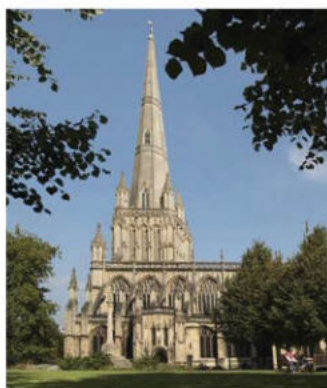
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CATHEDRALS, CHURCHES & ABBEYS

TO VISIT

ST MARY REDCLIFFE



Once described by Elizabeth I as "the fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England", Bristol's St Mary Redcliffe is one of our finest churches: a Grade I listed building, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture and a treasure of international importance. Rich in history, it has associations with, among others, John Cabot, William Penn, Thomas Chatterton and William Hogarth.

0117 231 0060
www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk

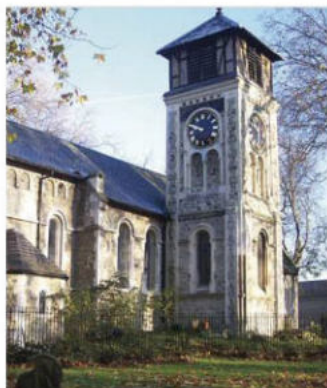
HEREFORD CATHEDRAL



Hereford Cathedral is small, but full of historical interest. Originally Saxon, rebuilt by the Normans and again by the Victorians. Treasures include a medieval shrine to St Thomas Cantilupe, the new SAS Ascension window and sculpture by John Maine RA, and the unique Mappa Mundi and Chained Library. The Hereford Magna Carta of 1017 will be exhibited from 10 July.

01432 374 200
www.herefordcathedral.org

ST. PANCRAS OLD CHURCH



Located in central London, St Pancras Old Church is believed to have been a site of Christian worship since the 4th century. The current grade II* listed church is a living testament to the development of the site since medieval times. The churchyard likewise contains numerous listed monuments. The church is open daily from 9am to 5pm. Admission is free.

020 7424 0724
www.posp.co.uk

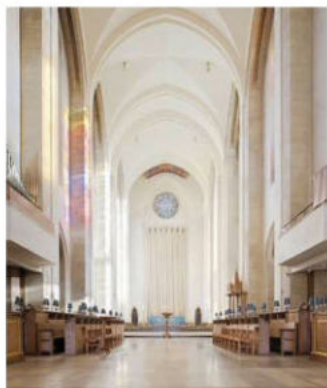
ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL



Founded in 604AD, Rochester Cathedral is the second oldest cathedral in England dating from the 1080s when the Norman monk Gundulf commenced its construction. Its newly restored crypt and library hold a wealth of priceless treasures and historical artefacts. crypt exhibitions showcase amazing collections for visitors to enjoy. Kent's most popular free attraction.

01634 843 366
www.rochester-cathedral.org

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL



Visit the refurbished People's Cathedral, explore this magnificent twentieth century building through new Guided Tours, Tower Tours and specialist trails for all ages, enjoying the sense of light and space envisaged by the original architect, Sir Edward Maufe.

01483 547 881
www.guildford-cathedral.org

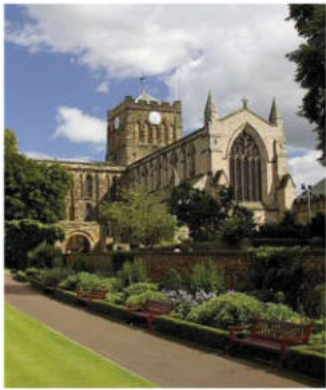
LEICESTER CATHEDRAL



St Martin's church in Leicester has only held cathedral status for 90 years, but dates back at least to Norman times. Since 2015 it houses the tomb of Richard III - arguably England's most controversial monarch - but there is much more to see and enjoy in this small but perfectly formed cathedral in one of Britain's most diverse cities.

0116 261 5373
www.leicester-cathedral.org

HEXHAM ABBEY



Originally erected in 674AD the Abbey has numerous treasures to enjoy, including the underground Anglo-Saxon Crypt of its founder St Wilfrid. There is also an interactive visitor centre and exhibition, telling the story of the history of the site with adult and child friendly features. At the centre of the bustling market town, the Abbey is a must see attraction. *Free entry.*

01434 602 031
www.hexhamabbey.org.uk

BUCKFAST ABBEY



Buckfast Abbey is an impressive Benedictine monastery nestled in the foothills of Dartmoor National Park. Spectacular award-winning gardens, a rich history and a beautiful musical tradition awaits visitors, alongside an array of shops including the Monastic Shop which sells a collection of gifts produced by convents and monasteries throughout Europe.

01364 645 500
www.buckfast.org.uk

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL



Standing in the heart of its vibrant city, Bristol Cathedral is one of England's great medieval churches. It boasts some of the UK's most important medieval architecture, including a Norman Chapter House, brightly coloured chapels, and lofty arches and vaults of a unique hall church design. Enjoy a rich programme of services and events, a shop, café and peaceful garden.

0117 926 4879
www.bristol-cathedral.co.uk

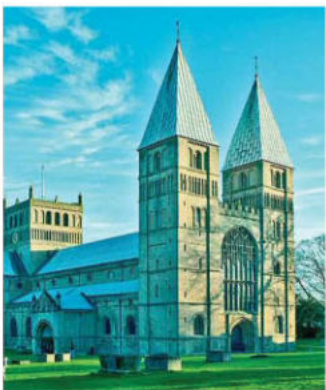
WELLS CATHEDRAL



A superb gothic cathedral with a magnificent 13th century West Front carrying 290 pieces of medieval sculpture; beautiful octagonal Chapter House; impressive scissor arches; 14th century Vicars' Close. Situated in the heart of medieval Wells, entry to the Cathedral is by donation and includes a free daily scheduled tour with one of our highly trained guides. "You must visit this stunning building" (*Trip Advisor*).

01749 674 483
www.wells cathedral.org.uk

SOUTHWELL MINSTER



Southwell Minster is a superb Cathedral and Minster Church with a fine Norman Nave. Other features include the magnificent Angel Window and the world renowned stone carvings the 'Leaves of Southwell' in the Chapter House. *Cathedral Shop and Refectory. Admission free, donations welcome Open: Daily 8a - 7pm. For all services, concerts and events visit the website*

01636 812 649
www.southwellminster.org

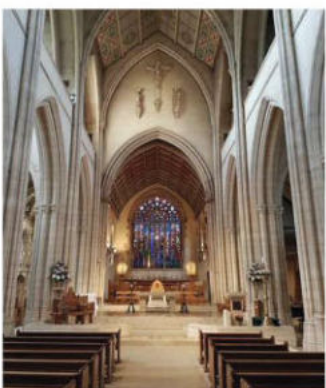
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST BARNABAS



This Pugin Cathedral was built in 1844. With the Blessed Sacrament Chapel still as Pugin designed. The Cathedral is open every day and you're more than welcome to pay a visit.

01159 539 839
www.stbarnabascathedral.co.uk

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, SOUTHWARK



Opened in 1848 & designed by AWN Pugin it is described as one of London's 'hidden gems'. In 1852 it became the first Catholic cathedral in London after the Reformation. Severely bomb damaged in 1941, Romilly Craze rebuilt the cathedral in an Arts & Crafts/Gothic Revival style. It has a striking interior and boasts fine stained glass, particularly by Harry Clark Studios, Dublin.

020 7928 5256
www.stgeorgescathedral.org.uk

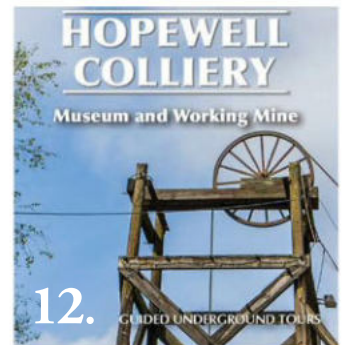
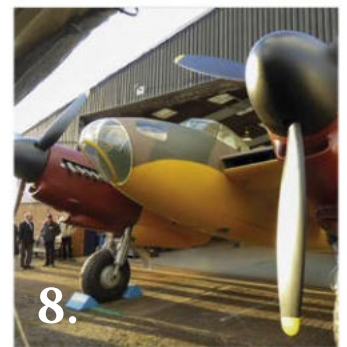
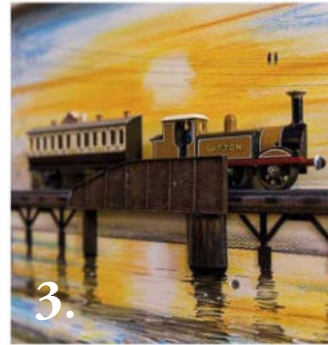
CATHEDRAL OF THE ISLES



The Cathedral of The Isles was consecrated in 1871 having been built as chapel to the College of The Holy Spirit to a design by William Butterfield. Both played a vital role in the development of the Oxford movement and today serve the Scottish Diocese of Argyll and The Isles as Cathedral and Retreat/ Guesthouse, welcoming people from across the globe.

01475 530 353
www.cathedraloftheisles.org

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info@blarneycastle.ie | 00 353 21 438 5252

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nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank

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valentinesmansion.com | 020 8708 8100

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libmus@freemasonry.london.museum

6. ACTON COURT

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actoncourt.com | 01454 228 224

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iwsteamrailway.co.uk

3. THE SPRING ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE

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thespring.co.uk | 023 9247 2700

7. G F WATTS: ENGLAND'S MICHELANGELO

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wattsgallery.org.uk | Guildford, Surrey

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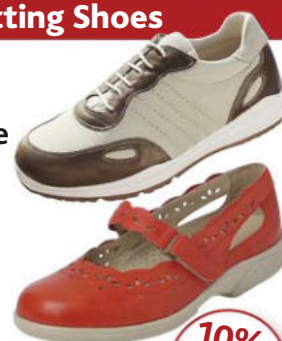
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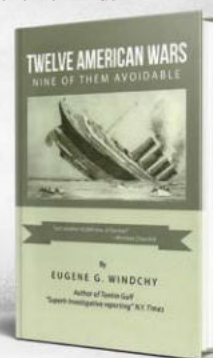
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Tricks, errors, and secret plans have taken the U.S. into avoidable wars. The author documents Churchill's Lusitania plot and tells how the Allies, not the Germans, instigated World War I.

Paris 1914: "It's my war!" bragged the Russian envoy. France's leading Socialist, Jean Jaures, vowed to expose the conspirators.

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VISITS



**DURHAM
CATHEDRAL**

OPEN TREASURE *The Treasures of St Cuthbert*

From Saturday 29 July 2017

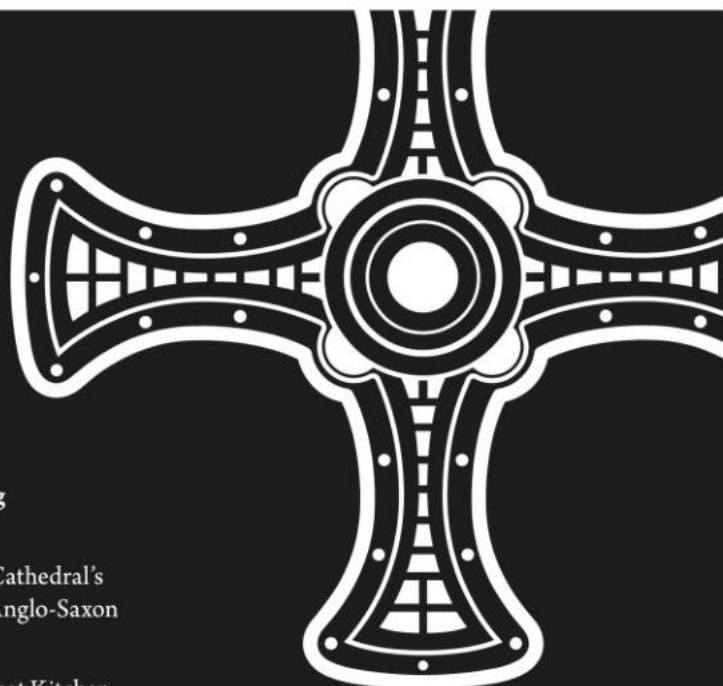
The Treasures of St Cuthbert are some of the most significant surviving Anglo-Saxon artefacts in the UK.

Now these exquisite treasures are going on permanent display in Durham Cathedral's world-class exhibition experience *Open Treasure*, including the conserved Anglo-Saxon wooden coffin and St Cuthbert's stunning pectoral cross.

Visit from 29 July to see The Treasures of St Cuthbert in the spectacular Great Kitchen, one of only two surviving medieval monastic kitchens in the UK.

Visitors to The Treasures of St Cuthbert can enjoy access to the Open Treasure exhibition spaces, located in the most intact surviving set of medieval monastic buildings in the UK.

Visit www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/open-treasure to plan your visit



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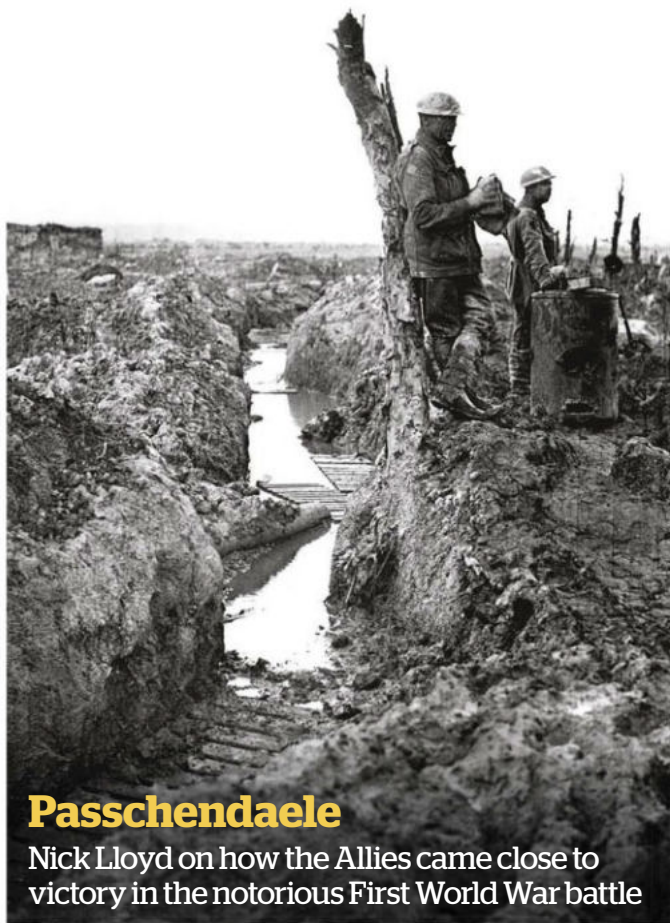
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NEXT MONTH

AUGUST ISSUE ON SALE 20 JULY 2017



Passchendaele

Nick Lloyd on how the Allies came close to victory in the notorious First World War battle

Partition photos

Yasmin Khan explores some iconic images from the division of British India in 1947



The fear of witches

Ronald Hutton delves into the history of witchcraft and bloody responses to it



Prince of darkness?

Michael Jones revisits a medieval massacre that sheds new light on the Black Prince

MISCELLANY

Q&A



QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE
QUIZZES
historyextra.com
/quiz

1. Who (left) was deposed in the Rum Rebellion of 1808?

2. What do peers of the realm traditionally do on their first visit to Oakham Castle in Rutland?

3. Who left Rhodes in 1522 and arrived in Malta in 1530?

4. What did Massachusetts governor Eldridge Gerry controversially authorise in 1812?

5. Who were the Petroleuses?

6. Whose official residence is this?



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. William Bligh, the governor of New South Wales and former captain of HMS *Bounty*.
2. Present it with a horseshoe.
3. The Knights of St John.
4. An alteration of the state's electoral boundaries, hence 'gerrymandering'.
5. Women who were (wrongly) believed to have burned down public buildings during the last days of the Paris Commune in 1871.
6. The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. It is Walmer Castle.

GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: historymagazine@historyextra.com or submit via our website: historyextra.com

Q What was the 'other' gunpowder plot of 1657?

O Adamberry, Gibraltar

A In January 1657 a group of plotters planned to set fire to Whitehall Palace by laying a "strange composition of combustible stuff, and two lighted matches" in the chapel. The aim was to kill the lord protector, Oliver Cromwell. Led by the ex-Levellers Edward Sexby and Miles Sindercombe, the plot was backed by Spanish funds and was linked to a potential Leveller/royalist invasion.

Silus Titus, a royalist who became

involved, thought the plot "required too much time, too many persons, and was subject to too many accidents to be carried on with any reasonable hopes that it should succeed". Yet John Thurloe, Cromwell's spymaster, who had infiltrated the plan, considered it genuine and in parliament revealed that there had been earlier attempts by these same men, using guns and explosives, to murder Cromwell.

Sindercombe was caught and tried for treason, but before he could be executed he committed suicide in the Tower of London on 13 February 1657. The government also later apprehended Sexby, but he was never tried. He died in the Tower in January 1658, after admitting his part in the conspiracy and his authorship of the notorious pamphlet: *Killing Noe Murder*, which openly advocated, and politically justified, Cromwell's assassination.

The most significant political consequence of the plot was a move to make Oliver

Cromwell king – although ultimately he was to reject the title.

Dr Alan Marshall is associate professor in history at Bath Spa University



ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's baking with bacon, for a fruitcake favoured by Wallis Simpson

Pork cake

While it may not have the most appetising name, pork cake is a surprisingly tasty sweet treat. This dense fruitcake, held together by pork fat, was a favourite of budget-conscious 19th-century Americans. One 1866 recipe called it "a most delightful cake made by the use of pork, which saves the expense of butter, eggs and milk". Another suggested it was "not inferior to the richest fruit cake" while only costing half the price.

Somewhat unexpectedly, the humble cake also appears in a 1942 cookbook by Wallis Simpson. The Duchess of Windsor listed it alongside gumbo and pickled oysters as one of her favourite southern dishes.

If you can forgive its unappealing preparation, the cake is easy to make, and tastes similar to an average fruitcake. However, its unusual aftertaste means I might just push the boat out and stick with the butter and eggs in future.

INGREDIENTS

½lb fat salt pork
¾ cup boiling water
¾ cup molasses
½ cup firmly packed brown sugar
2 cups raisins
1 cup currants
3½ cups sifted flour
1½ tsp baking soda
1½ tsp cinnamon
1½ tsp nutmeg

METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 180°C (gas mark 4) and line or grease a loaf tin. Dice the pork fat finely, or blend in a food processor. Place in a large mixing bowl and pour over the water. Mix, then leave to cool. Add all the dry ingredients. Beat until it resembles standard cake mixture. Bake in the tin for around 1.5 hours, or until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean.

VERDICT

"Deceptively delicious"

Difficulty: 3/10

Time: 2 hours total

Based on recipes from *theoldfoodie.com* and *seriouseats.com*

This fruit cake tastes a lot better than its name implies



King Alfred's ability to gain the allegiance of the nobility helped him reassemble an army within just a few months



Q How was King Alfred able to defeat the Vikings just five months after being forced to hide in the Athelney marshes following a Viking ambush in AD 878?

John Hill, Bournemouth

A Our main sources for this period are the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Alfred's biographer Asser. Both were closely linked to the court circle of King Alfred, writing a few years after 878, so we shouldn't necessarily swallow whole a portrait of Alfred being at his lowest ebb at this time.

There are some clues in the accounts, though. Athelney was a royal centre controlling part of Somerset, and the local governor (ealdorman), Oda, had defeated other Vikings in the area. Alfred's keys to victory were the existing networks and central places in the landscape. The *Chronicle* refers to Alfred's force moving through places close to royal estate centres (where food could be collected) and places where local communities would assemble.

Around Ascensiontide (a known point in the liturgical year after Easter), Alfred made

an appearance at Egbert's Stone, which was a moment of high drama. Furthermore, his appearance at a particular place at a particular time of year used a 'language' that contemporaries would understand.

Wessex worked on local networks of aristocrats and clergy who communicated via means such as 'riding men' and met at assemblies. The time between the Viking ambush in January and the battle of Edington in May 878 was a period in which the allegiance of the nobility could be won. Viking alliances appealed to some, maybe many, but the whole kingdom was not under Viking control. By showing that he was still in control in the right places and at the right times, Alfred could make his winning move.

Ryan Lavelle, reader in early medieval history at the University of Winchester

PRIZE CROSSWORD

Who was this American writer who championed Cubism and Ernest Hemingway? (see 22 across)



CROSSWORD PRIZE



BOOK worth £25 for 5 winners

Collecting the World: The Life and Curiosity of Hans Sloane by James Delbourgo

This engrossing and ambitious biography of Sir Hans Sloane is the first in more than 60 years. Sloane (1660–1753) was the greatest collector of his time and a pre-eminent natural historian who assembled an astonishing collection of specimens, artefacts and oddities.

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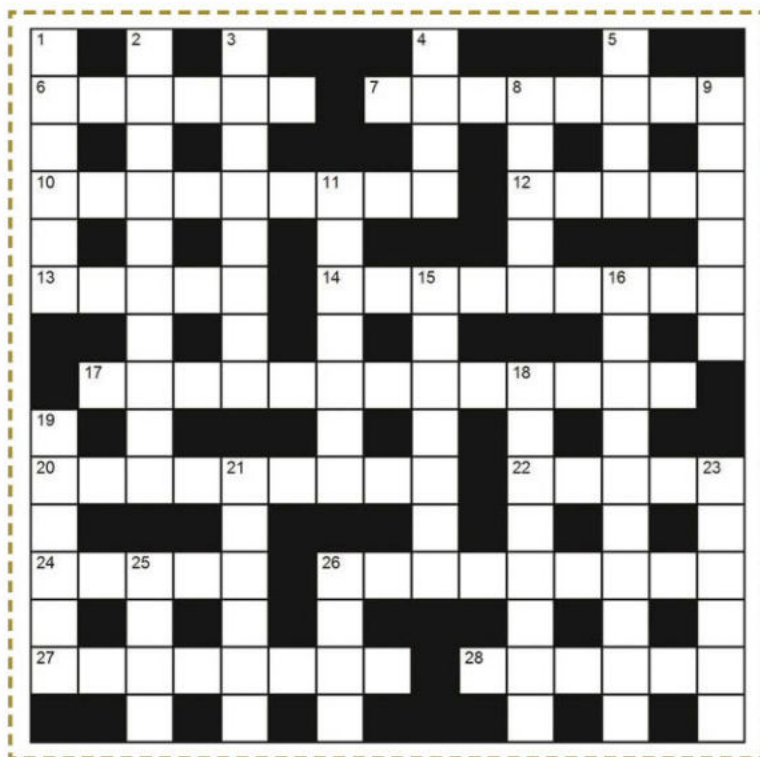
Across

- 6** For example, one of the Huguenots fleeing France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (6)
7 The Austro-___ War (or Seven Weeks' War) of 1866 (8)
10 English name of the Italian navigator who laid claim to 'New Found Land', believing it to be part of Asia (4,5)
12 Legendary Cretan ruler, according to Greek mythology (5)
13 Alexander ____, a Hungarian-born film-maker, who was a leading figure in British films in the 1930s and 40s (5)
14 Location over which a Pan Am London-New York airliner was blown up by a timer-activated device in 1988 (9)
17 Executed lord chancellor, a Catholic saint, often described as a 'man for all seasons' (3,6,4)
20 Prominent figures in the 18th-century cultural flowering of this city were Adam Smith and David Hume (9)
22 Gertrude ____, US writer, who championed Cubism and writers such as Hemingway (5)
24 The central area of an amphitheatre (5)
26 The non-statutory, precedent-based legal system of England which has evolved since medieval times (6,3)
27 Shortened name of the British peerage guide, first published 1802 (8)
28 Dictator, whose demands for his country entering the Second World War as an Axis partner, were rejected by Hitler (6)

Down

- 1** [One spelling of] the Turkish dynasty whose forces captured Baghdad in 1055 (6)
2 The remains of this 15th-century English king, killed in battle, were located and reburied centuries later (7,3)

The Private Life of Henry VIII is one of this director's famous films (see 13 across)



- 3** One of a number of pieces of legislation outlawing the practice of paying wages by tokens etc. (5,3)
4 Tabloid-style name for a certain 20th-century Conservative PM (3,1)
5 A hill of Jerusalem and a symbolic name for the land of Israel (4)
8 French location of battle fought from July to November 1916, with over a million casualties (5)
9 Middle Eastern statesman who nationalised the Suez Canal (6)
11 British foreign secretary whose Declaration (1917) pledged the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (7)
15 Town in SE England which grew around the Royal Naval dockyard established in Tudor times (7)
16 Israeli chain of fortifications along the Suez Canal, built after its success in the Six Day War (3,3,4)
18 USS ____ was the ship on which the formal Japanese surrender was signed in 1945 (8)
19 Small bomb in a case, used from the 16th century to blow in doors etc. (6)
21 ____ folk, western European people of the late

- Neolithic / early Bronze Age (6)
23 One of Britain's greatest scientists, who was master of the Royal Mint in his last years (6)
25 Mediterranean island with Napoleon as its nominal ruler in 1814/15 (4)
26 A plot to assassinate the British cabinet was hatched in this London street in 1820 (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

SOLUTION TO OUR MAY CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Alchemy 5 Avignon 9 Livy 10 Ligny 12 Eoka 13 Anderton 14 Ganges 15 Stopes 17 Harris 19 Holmes 21 Rahere 23 Dacoit 24 Hittites 26 Otis 27 Ranke 28 Nina 29 Sallust 30 Strauss
Down: 2 Leibnitz 3 Hoyle 4 Miletus 6 Voyager 7 Greenwich 8 Oakley 11 Genghis Khan 16 Proconsul 18 Ardennes 20 Mithras 21 Retreat 22 Mantua 25 Ionia
10 WINNERS OF THE BIRTH OF A NATION
 D Cutler, Dorset; D Price, Staffordshire; P Clarke, Oxfordshire; A Cleminson, Middlesex; A Penn, Oxfordshire; I Hatton, Surrey; I Barford, Clwyd; D Good, Derbyshire; F Thorogood, Cornwall; IM Payne, Jersey

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“Caesar realised the importance of good public relations and of ‘putting out’ the right story about himself, even if the story he told didn’t necessarily bear much relation to the facts”

TV presenter Nick Knowles
chooses

Julius Caesar

100–44 BC

A brilliant military leader who inspired great loyalty among his troops, Julius Caesar conquered Gaul, forced advancing Germanic tribes back after building a bridge over the Rhine river, and invaded Britain twice. In 49 BC, his army crossed the Rubicon river to take Rome and, following campaigns in Asia Minor, Africa and Spain, he governed the city as a dictator. After implementing a number of wide-ranging reforms, including the introduction of the Julian calendar, Caesar was assassinated by Brutus and Cassius on the Ides (15th) of March, 44 BC.

When did you first hear about Julius Caesar?

My elder brother used to read me the Asterix books as a kid and I remember one of those stories was about Asterix and Caesar, so I must’ve been aware of him by the age of seven or eight. I was instantly hooked by this extraordinary character, and I’ve been fascinated by him ever since.

What kind of person was he?

Caesar was a complex man. Firstly, he was a brilliant politician, and a great manoeuvrer and survivor. Secondly, he was one of the first PR gurus – he realised the importance of good public relations and of ‘putting out’ the right story about himself, even if the story he told didn’t necessarily bear much relation to the facts. Thirdly, he was a superb military campaigner who, crucially, knew the importance of surrounding himself with the right people.

What made Caesar a hero?

Just like Walter Raleigh, Caesar came from a pretty lowborn noble family, but was still able to rise to great heights – despite being a bit of a crook and a scoundrel, albeit a loveable one. And then even with powerful enemies trying to get one over on him at every opportunity, he invariably came out on top, smelling of roses. Even in his death, he managed to organise his succession so as to ensure that his great-nephew, Octavianus, became emperor.

What was his finest hour?

Strange as it may sound, perhaps the management of his own death. That was genius. Caesar was almost certainly ill and dying



Ruthless, clever, occasionally even loveable – Nick Knowles is impressed by Julius Caesar’s amazing rise to power

anyway – most likely of a brain tumour – but he knew who the people were who wanted to kill him, and knew that if their plot was successful, it would dash their hopes of winning power. His finest hour certainly wouldn’t be his invasions of Britain, which were utterly disastrous – although he managed to spin it so that everyone thought he’d achieved his objectives.

Is there anything you don’t particularly admire about him?

The fact that he called his daughter Julia. Calling his daughter after himself just wasn’t fair. He couldn’t have made it clearer that what he actually wanted was a son.

Can you see any parallels between Caesar’s life and your own?

I’m a ruthless person too, and have tried to take over the world in my own small way!

Would you like to have lived in Roman times?

As a Briton, it wouldn’t have been much fun because I’d have been under the cosh. That said, I’d love to have seen Rome at the time of Caesar’s ascendancy. What an extraordinary place it must’ve been. I’d have enjoyed the partying, too – the Romans knew how to enjoy themselves.

If you could meet Caesar, what would you ask him?

I’d like to ask him a few things. Firstly, what frightened him? Secondly, who did he trust? And lastly, did he know that he was dying when he was assassinated? **H**

Nick Knowles was talking to York Membery

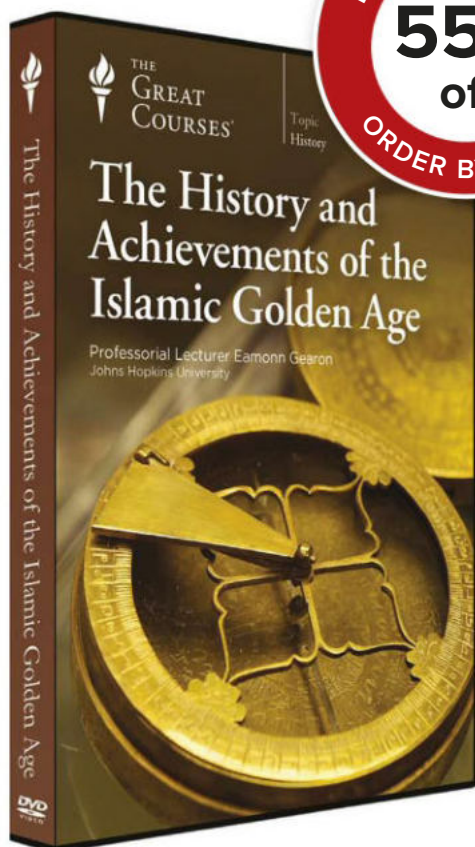
Nick Knowles is a television presenter, best known for fronting *DIY SOS: The Big Build* and the quiz show *Who Dares Wins* – both on BBC One. His latest book is *Proper Healthy Food* (BBC Books, 2017)

DISCOVER MORE

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